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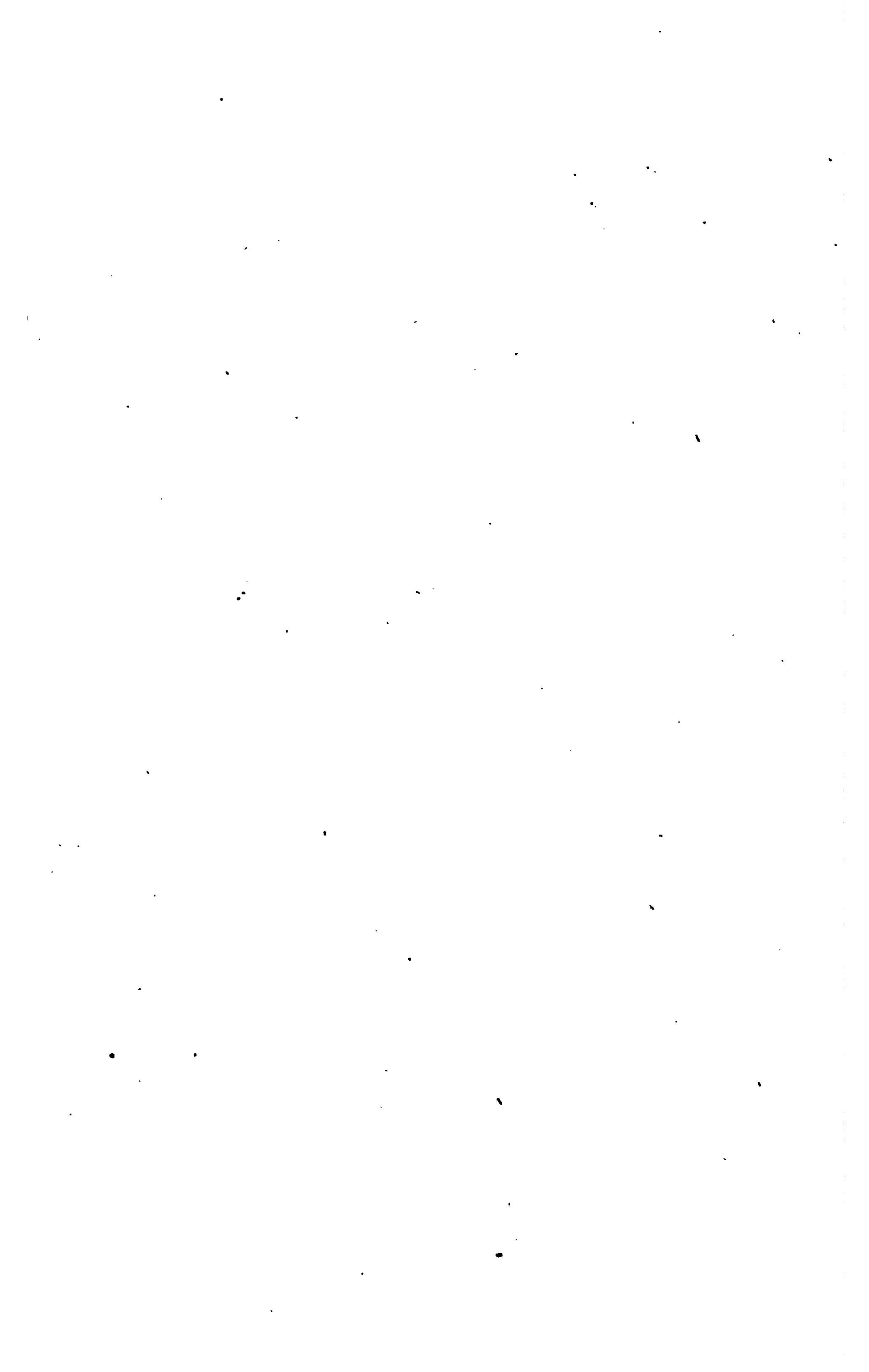
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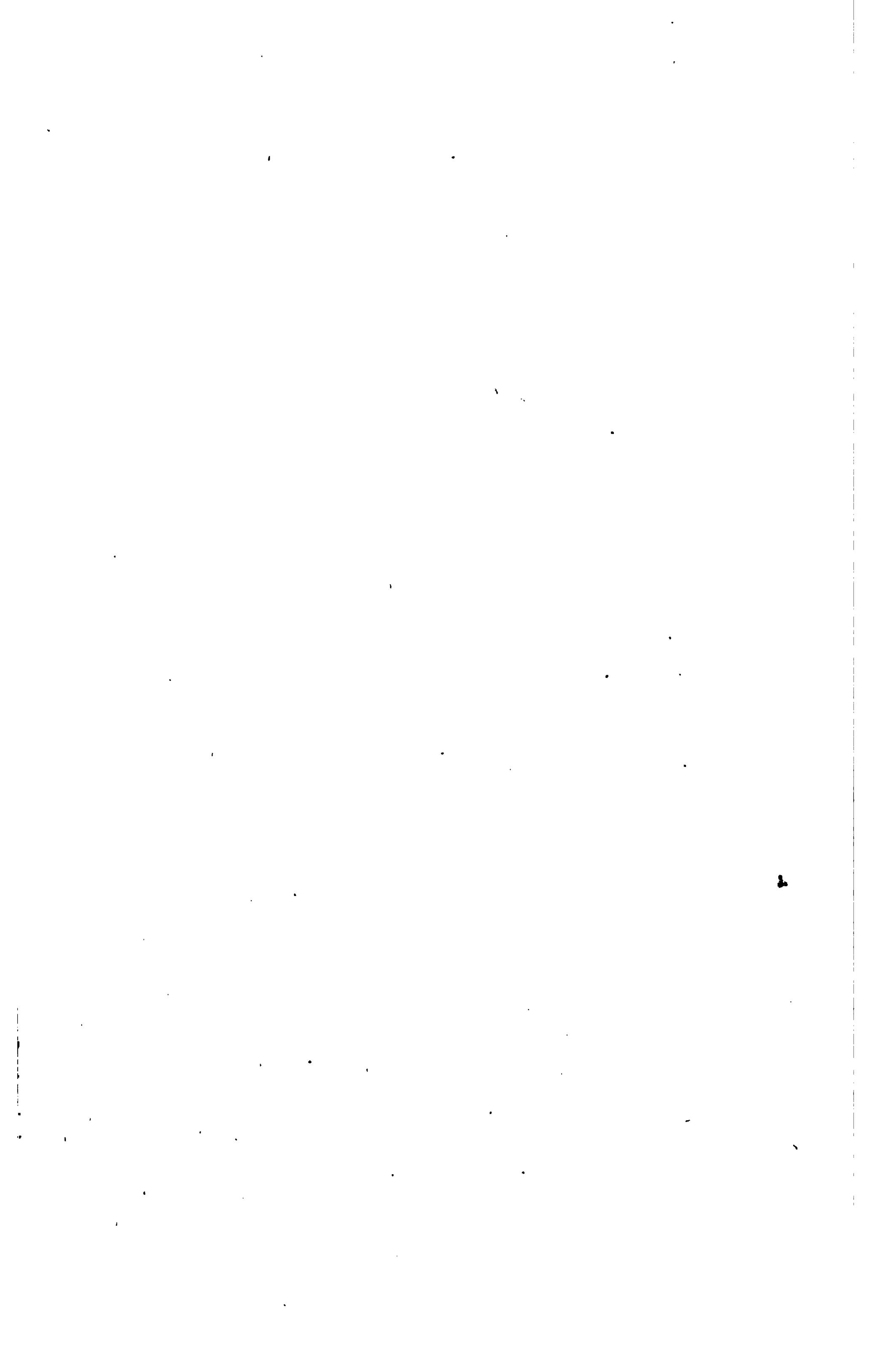
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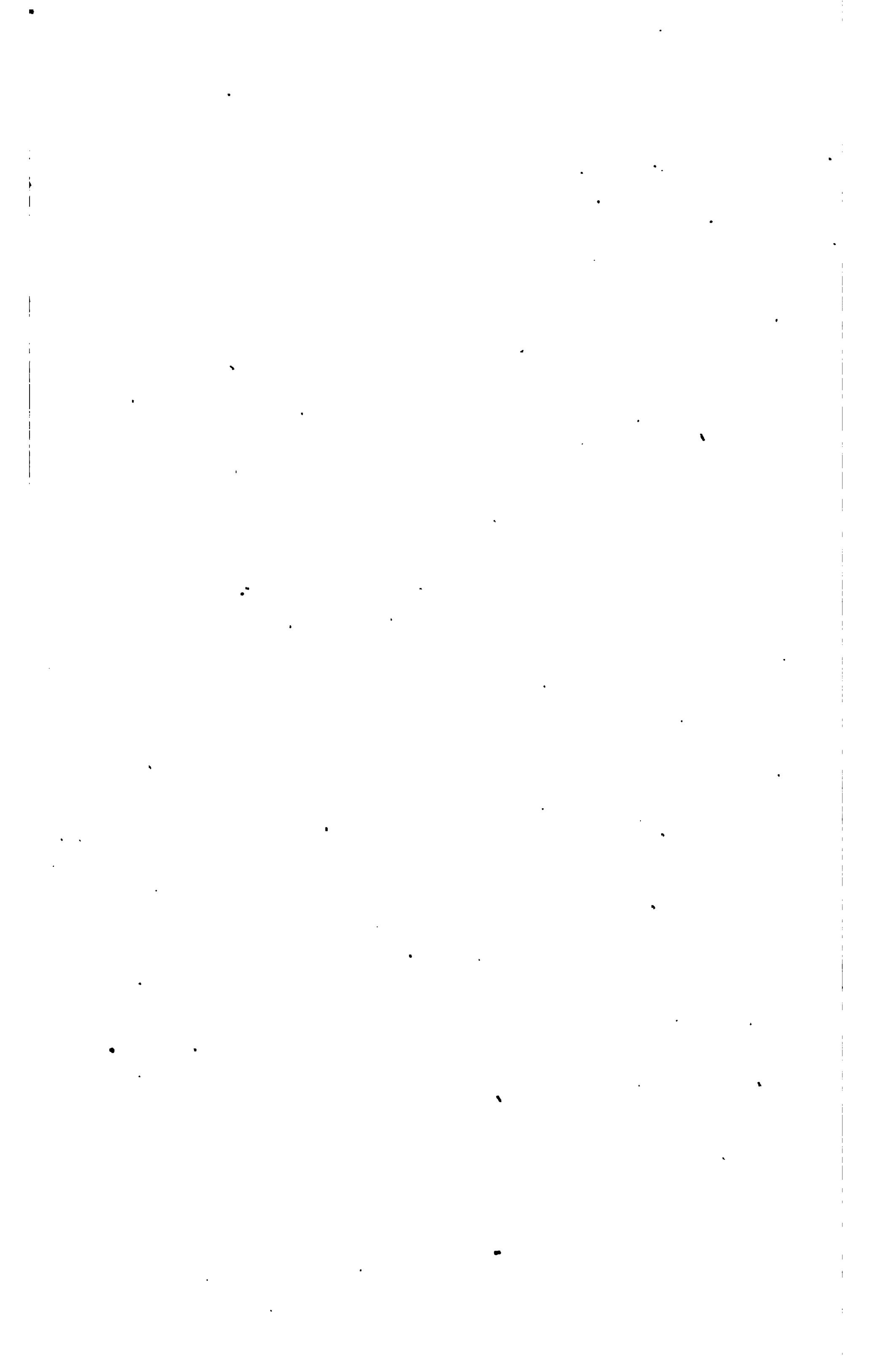
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Drawn by M. E. Edwards.]

(Frontispiece.

LEAF BY LEAF, AND TEAR BY TEAR.

1482

LONDON SOCIETY.

An Illustrated Magazine

OR

LIGHT AND AMUSING LITERATURE

FOR

THE HOURS OF RELAXATION.

VOLUME XXIII.

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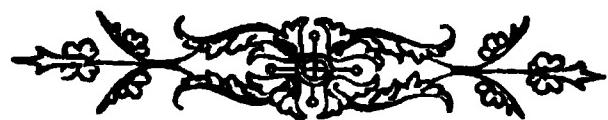
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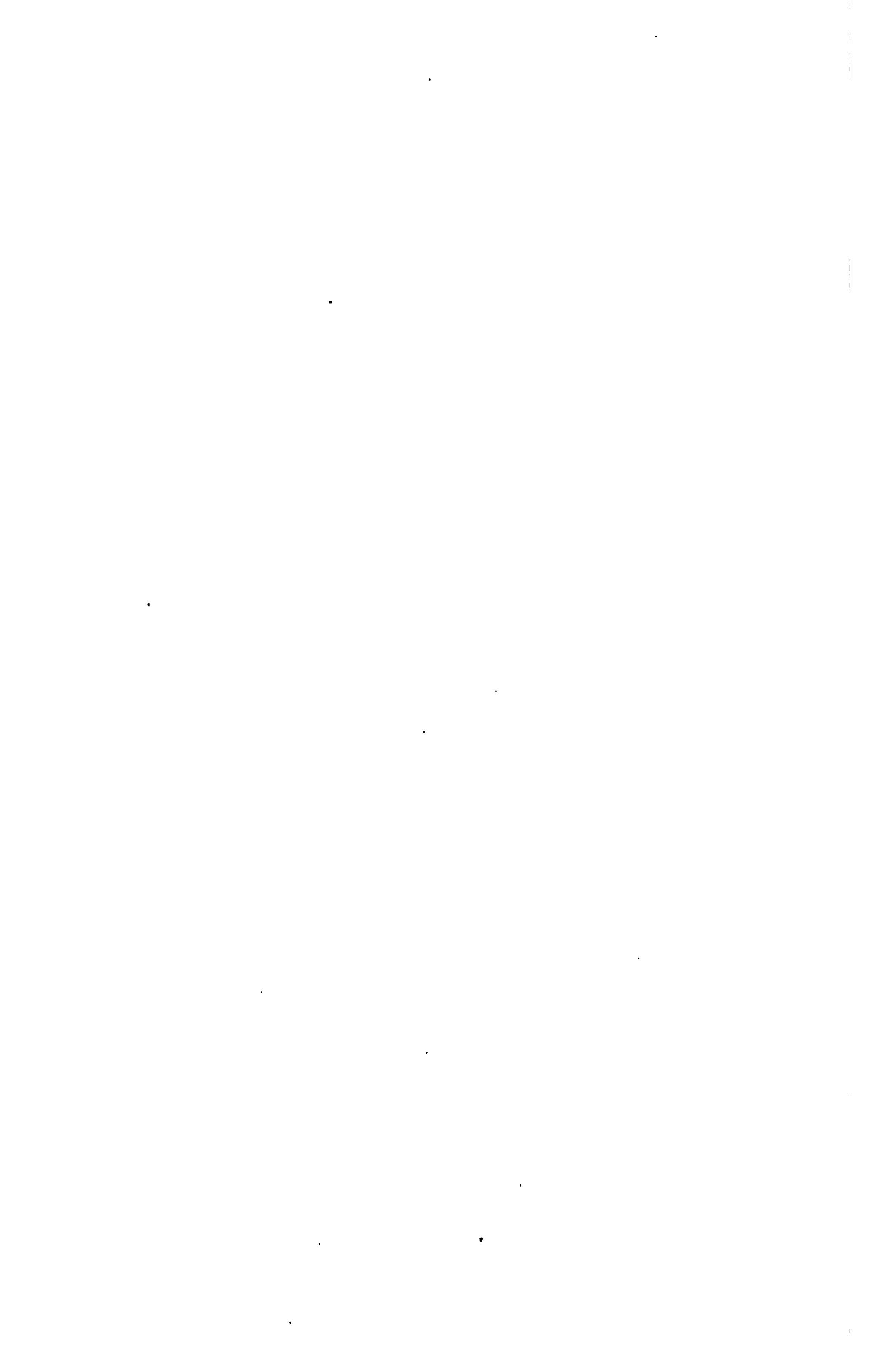
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LONDON SOCIETY.

JANUARY, 1873.

A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

By CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

CHAPTER VIII.

DR. STAINES begged leave to distinguish: he had not said he would set up a carriage at the first one hundred guinea fee, but only that he would not set one up before. There are misguided people who would call this logic: but Rosa said it was equivocating, and urged him so warmly that at last he burst out, 'Who can go on for ever saying "no," to the only creature he loves?'—and caved. In forty-eight hours more a brougham waited at Mrs. Staines' door. The servant engaged to drive it was Andrew Pearman, a bachelor, and, hitherto, an under-groom. He readily consented to be coachman, and do certain domestic work as well. So Mrs. Staines had a man servant as well as a carriage.

Ere long, three or four patients called, or wrote, one after the other. These Rosa set down to brougham, and crowded; she even crowded to Lady Cicely Treherne, to whose influence, and not to brougham's, every one of these patients was owing. Lady Cicely kissed her, and demurely enjoyed the poor soul's self-satisfaction.

Staines himself, while he drove to or from these patients, felt more sanguine, and, buoyed as he was by the consciousness of ability, began to hope he had turned the corner.

He sent an account of Lord Ayscough's case to a medical ma-

gazine: and so full is the world of flunkeyism, that this article, though he withheld the name, retaining only the title, got the literary wedge in for him at once; and in due course, he became a paid contributor to two medical organs, and used to study and write more, and indent the little stone yard less, than heretofore.

It was about this time circumstances made him acquainted with Phœbe Dale. Her intermediate history I will dispose of in fewer words than it deserves. Her Ruin, Mr. Reginald Falcon, was dismissed from his club, for marking high cards on the back with his nail. This stopped his remaining resource—borrowing; so he got more and more out at elbows, till at last, he came down to hanging about billiard-rooms, and making a little money by concealing his game; from that, however, he rose to be a marker.

Having culminated to that, he wrote and proposed marriage to Miss Dale, in a charming letter: she showed it to her father, with pride.

Now, if his vanity, his disloyalty, his falsehood, his ingratitude, and his other virtues had not stood in the way, he would have done this three years ago, and been jumped at.

But the offer came too late; not for Phœbe—she would have taken him in a moment—but for

her friends. A baited hook is one thing, a bare hook is another. Farmer Dale had long discovered where Phœbe's money went: he said not a word to her; but went up to town like a shot; found Falcon out, and told him he mustn't think to eat his daughter's bread. She should marry a man that could make a decent livelihood; and if she was to run away with *him*, why they'd starve together. The farmer was resolute, and spoke very loud, like one that expects opposition, and comes prepared to quarrel. Instead of that, this artful rogue addressed him with deep respect, and an affected veneration, that quite puzzled the old man; acquiesced in every word, expressed contrition for his past misdeeds, and told the farmer he had quite determined to labour with his hands. ' You know, farmer,' said he, ' I am not the only gentleman who has come to that in the present day. Now, all my friends, that have seen my sketches, assure me I am a born painter; and a painter I'll be—for love of Phœbe.'

The farmer made a wry face. ' Painter! that is a sorry sort of a trade.'

' You are mistaken. It's the best trade going. There are gentlemen making their thousands a year by it.'

' Not in our parts, there bain't. Stop a bit. What be ye going to paint, sir? Housen, or folk?'

' Oh, hang it, not houses. Figures, landscapes.'

' Well, ye might just make shift to live at it, I suppose, with here and there a sign-board. They are the best paid, our way: but, Lord bless ye, *they* wants head-piece. Well, sir, let me see your work. Then we'll talk further.'

' I'll go to work this afternoon,' said Falcon, eagerly; then with affected surprise, ' Bless me; I

forgot. I have no palette, no canvas, no colours. You couldn't lend me a couple of sovereigns to buy them, could you?'

' Ay, sir. I could. But I woan't. I'll lend ye the things, though, if you have a mind to go with me and buy 'em.'

Falcon agreed, with a lofty smile; and the purchases were made.

Mr. Falcon painted a landscape or two out of his imagination. The dealers to whom he took them, declined them; one advised the gentleman painter to colour tea-boards; ' That's your line,' said he.

' The world has no taste,' said the gentleman painter: ' but it has got lots of vanity: I'll paint portraits.'

He did; and formidable ones: his portraits were amazingly like the people, and yet unlike men and women, especially about the face. One thing, he didn't trouble with lights and shades, but went slap at the features.

His brush would never have kept him; but he carried an instrument, in the use of which he really was an artist, viz. his tongue. By wheedling and underselling—for he only charged a pound for the painted canvas—he contrived to live; then he aspired to dress as well as live. With this second object in view, he hit upon a characteristic expedient.

He used to prowl about, and when he saw a young woman sweeping the afternoon streets with a long silk train, and, in short, dressed to ride in the park, yet parading the streets, he would take his hat off to her with an air of profound respect, and ask permission to take her portrait. Generally he met a prompt rebuff; but, if the fair was so unlucky as to hesitate a single moment, he told her a melting tale; he had

once driven his four-in-hand; but by endorsing his friends' bills, was reduced to painting likenesses, admirable likenesses in oils, only a guinea each.

His piteous tale provoked more jibes than pity; but as he had no shame, the rebuffs went for nothing: he actually did get a few sitters by his audacity: and some of the sitters actually took the pictures, and paid for them; others declined them with fury as soon as they were finished. These he took back with a piteous sigh, that sometimes extracted half-a-crown. Then he painted over the rejected one and let it dry; so that sometimes a paid portrait would present a beauty enthroned on the debris of two or three rivals, and that is where few beauties would object to sit.

All this time he wrote nice letters to Phœbe, and adopted the tone of the struggling artist, and the true lover, who wins his bride by patience, perseverance, and indomitable industry; a babbled of 'Self Help.'

Meantime, Phœbe was not idle: an excellent business woman, she took immediate advantage of a new station, that was built near the farm, to send up milk, butter, and eggs to London. Being genuine, they sold like wildfire. Observing that, she extended her operations, by buying of other farmers, and forwarding to London: and then, having of course an eye to her struggling artist, she told her father she must have a shop in London, and somebody in it she could depend upon.

'With all my heart, wench,' said he; 'but it must not be thou. I can't spare thee.'

'May I have Dick, father?'

'Dick! he is rather young.'

'But he is very quick, father, and minds every word I tell him.'

'Ay, he is as fond of thee as

ever a cow was of a calf. Well, you can try him.'

So the lovesick woman of business set up a little shop, and put her brother Dick in it, and all to see more of her struggling artist. She stayed several days, to open the little shop, and start the business. She advertised pure milk, and challenged scientific analysis of everything she sold. This came of her being a reader; she knew, by the journals, that we live in a sinful and adulterating generation; and anything pure must be a god-send to the poor poisoned public.

Now, Dr. Staines, though known to the profession as a diagnost, was also an analyst, and this challenge brought him down on Phœbe Dale. He told her he was a physician, and in search of pure food for his own family—would she really submit the milk to analysis?

Phœbe smiled an honest country smile, and said, 'Surely, sir.' She gave him every facility, and he applied those simple tests which are commonly used in France, though hardly known in England.

He found it perfectly pure, and told her so; and gazed at Phœbe for a moment, as a phenomenon.

She smiled again at that, her broad country smile. 'That is a wonder in London, I dare say. It's my belief half the children that die here are perished with watered milk. Well, sir, we shan't have that on our souls, father and I; he is a farmer in Essex. This comes a many miles, this milk.'

Staines looked in her face, with kindly approval marked on his own eloquent features. She blushed a little, at so fixed a regard. Then he asked her if she would supply him with milk, butter, and eggs.

'Why, if you mean sell you them, yes, sir, with pleasure. But for sending them home to you in

this big town, as some do, I can't; for there's only brother Dick and me: it is an experiment like.'

'Very well,' said Staines: 'I will send for them.'

'Thank you kindly, sir. I hope you won't be offended sir; but we only sell for ready money.'

'All the better: my order at home is, no bills.'

When he was gone, Phœbe, assuming vast experience, though this was only her third day, told Dick that was one of the right sort: 'and oh, Dick,' said she, 'did you notice his eye?'

'Not particular, sister.'

'There now; the boy is blind. Why, 'twas like a jewel. Such an eye I never saw in a man's head, nor a woman's neither.'

Staines told his wife about Phœbe, and her brother, and spoke of her with a certain admiration that raised Rosa's curiosity, and even that sort of vague jealousy that fires at bare praise. 'I should like to see this phenomenon,' said she. 'You shall,' said he. 'I have to call on Mrs. Manly. She lives near. I will drop you at the little shop; and come back for you.'

He did so, and that gave Rosa a quarter of an hour to make her purchases. When he came back he found her conversing with Phœbe, as if they were old friends, and Dick glaring at his wife with awe and admiration. He could hardly get her away.

She was far more extravagant in her praises than Dr. Staines had been. 'What a good creature,' said she. 'And how clever! To think of her setting up a shop like that all by herself; for her Dick is only seventeen.'

Dr. Staines recommended the little shop wherever he went, and even extended its operations. He asked Phœbe to get her own wheat ground at home, and send the

flour up in bushel bags. 'These assassins, the bakers,' said he, 'are putting copper into the flour now, as well as alum. Pure flour is worth a fancy price to any family. With that we can make the bread of life. What you buy in the shops is the bread of death.'

Dick was a good, sharp boy, devoted to his sister. He stuck to the shop in London, and handed the money to Phœbe, when she came for it. She worked for it in Essex, and extended her country connection for supply as the retail business increased.

Staines wrote an article on pure food, and incidentally mentioned the shop as a place where flour, milk, and butter were to be had pure. This article was published in the 'Lancet,' and caused quite a run upon the little shop. By-and-by Phœbe enlarged it, for which there were great capabilities, and made herself a pretty little parlour, and there she and Dick sat to Falcon for their portraits; here, too, she hung his rejected landscapes. They were fair in her eyes; what matter whether they were like nature? his hand had painted them. She knew, from him, that everybody else had rejected them. With all the more pride and love did she have them framed in gold, and hung up with the portraits in her little sanctum.

For a few months Phœbe Dale was as happy as she deserved to be. Her lover was working, and faithful to her—at least she saw no reason to doubt it. He came to see her every evening, and seemed devoted to her; would sit quietly with her, or walk with her, or take her to a play, or a music-hall—at her expense.

She now lived in a quiet elysium, with a bright and rapturous dream of the future; for she saw she had hit on a good vein of business,

and should soon be independent, and able to indulge herself with a husband, and ask no man's leave.

She sent to Essex for a dairy-maid, and set her to churn milk into butter, *coram populo*, at a certain hour every morning. This made a new sensation. At other times the woman was employed to deliver milk and cream to a few favoured customers.

Mrs. Staines dropped in now and then, and chatted with her. Her sweet face, and her *naïveté* won Phœbe's heart; and one day, as happiness is apt to be communicative, she let out to her, in reply to a feeler or two as to whether she was quite alone, that she was engaged to be married to a gentleman; 'But he is not rich, ma'am,' said Phœbe, plaintively; 'he has had trouble: obliged to work for his living, like me; he painted these pictures, *every one of them*. If it was not making too free, and you could spare a guinea—he charges no more for the picture, only you must go to the expense of the frame.'

'Of course I will,' said Rosa, warmly. 'I'll sit for it here, any day you like.'

Now, Rosa said this, out of her ever ready kindness, not to wound Phœbe: but, having made the promise, she kept clear of the place for some days, hoping Phœbe would forget all about it. Meantime she sent her husband to buy.

In about a fortnight she called again, primed with evasions if she should be asked to sit; but nothing of the kind was proposed. Phœbe was dealing, when she went in. The customers disposed of, she said to Mrs. Staines, 'Oh, ma'am, I am glad you are come. I have something I should like to show you.' She took her into the parlour, and made her sit down: then she opened a drawer, and

took out a very small substance that looked like a tear of ground glass, and put it on the table before her. 'There, ma'am,' said she, 'that is all he has had for painting a friend's picture.'

'Oh! what a shame.'

'His friend was going abroad—to Natal; to his uncle that farms out there, and does very well; it is a first-rate part, if you take out a little stock with you, and some money; so my one gave him credit, and when the letter came with that postmark, he counted on a five-pound note: but the letter only said he had got no money yet, but sent him something as a keepsake: and there was this little stone. Poor fellow! he flung it down in a passion; he was so disappointed.'

Phœbe's great grey eyes filled; and Rosa gave a little coo of sympathy that was very womanly and loveable.

Phœbe leaned her cheek on her hand, and said, thoughtfully, 'I picked it up, and brought it away; for, after all—don't you think, ma'am, it is very strange that a friend should send it all that way, if it was worth nothing at all?'

'It is impossible. He could not be so heartless.'

'And do you know, ma'am, when I take it up in my fingers, it doesn't feel like a thing that was worth nothing.'

'No more it does: it makes my fingers tremble. May I take it home, and show it my husband? he is a great physician and knows everything.'

'I am sure I should be much obliged to you, ma'am.'

Rosa drove home, on purpose to show it to Christopher. She ran into his study. 'Oh, Christopher, please look at that. You know that good creature we have our flour and milk and things of. She is engaged, and he is a painter.

Oh such daubs! He painted a friend, and the friend sent that home all the way from Natal, and he dashed it down, and she picked it up, and what is it? ground glass, or a pebble, or what?

'Humph!—by its shape, and the great—brilliancy—and refraction of light, on this angle, where the stone has got polished by rubbing against other stones, in the course of ages, I'm inclined to think it is—a diamond.'

'A diamond!' shrieked Rosa. 'No wonder my fingers trembled. Oh, can it be? Oh you good, cold-blooded Christie!—Poor things!—Come along Diamond! Oh you beauty! Oh you duck!'

'Don't be in such a hurry. I only said I thought it was a diamond. Let me weigh it against water, and then I shall know.'

He took it to his little laboratory, and returned in a few minutes, and said, 'Yes. It is just three times and a half heavier than water. It is a diamond.'

'Are you positive?'

'I'll stake my existence.'

'What is it worth?'

'My dear, I'm not a jeweller: but it is very large and pear-shaped, and I see no flaw: I don't think you could buy it for less than three hundred pounds.'

'Three hundred pounds! It is worth 300*l.*'

'Or sell it for more than 150*l.*'

'A hundred and fifty! It is worth 150*l.*'

'Why, my dear, one would think you had invented "the diamond." Show me how to crystallize carbon, and I will share your enthusiasm.'

'Oh, I leave you to carbonize crystal. I prefer to gladden hearts: and I will do it this minute, with my diamond.'

'Do, dear; and I will take that opportunity to finish my second article on Adulteration.'

Rosa drove off to Phœbe Dale.

Now Phœbe was drinking tea with Reginald Falcon, in her little parlour. 'Who is that, I wonder?' said she, when the carriage drew up.

Reginald drew back a corner of the gauze curtain which had been drawn across the little glass door leading from the shop.

'It is a lady, and a beautiful—Oh! let me get out.' And he rushed out at the door leading to the kitchen, not to be recognized.

This set Phœbe all in a flutter, and the next moment Mrs. Staines tapped at the little door, then opened it, and peeped. 'Good news! may I come in?'

'Surely,' said Phœbe, still troubled and confused by Reginald's strange agitation.

'There! It is a diamond!' screamed Rosa. 'My husband knew it directly. He knows everything. If ever you are ill, go to him and nobody else—by the refraction, and the angle, and its being three times and a half as heavy as water. It is worth 300*l.* to buy, and 150*l.* to sell.'

'Oh!'

'So don't you go throwing it away, as he did. (In a whisper) Two teacups! Was that him? I have driven him away. I am so sorry. I'll go; and then you can tell him. Poor fel-low!'

'Oh, ma'am, don't go yet,' said Phœbe, trembling. 'I haven't half thanked you.'

'Oh, bother thanks. Kiss me; that is the way.'

'May I?'

'You may, and must. There—and there—and there. Oh dear, what nice things good luck and happiness are, and how sweet to bring them for once.'

Upon this, Phœbe and she had a nice little cry together, and Mrs. Staines went off refreshed thereby, and as gay as a lark, pointing

slyly at the door, and making faces to Phœbe that she knew he was there, and she only retired, out of her admirable discretion, that they might enjoy the diamond together.

When she was gone, Reginald, whose eye and ear had been at the keyhole, alternately gloating on the face and drinking the accents of the only woman he had ever really loved, came out, looking pale, and strangely disturbed; and sat down at the table, without a word.

Phœbe came back to him, full of the diamond. ‘Did you hear what she said, my dear? It is a diamond; it is worth 150*l.* at least. Why, what ails you? Ah! to be sure! you know that lady.’

‘I have cause to know her. Cursed jilt!’

‘You seem a good deal put out at the sight of her.’

‘It took me by surprise, that is all.’

‘It takes me by surprise too. I thought you were cured. I thought *my* turn had come at last.’

Reginald met this in sullen silence. Then Phœbe was sorry she had said it; for, after all, it wasn’t the man’s fault if an old sweetheart had run into the room, and given him a start. So she made him some fresh tea, and pressed him kindly to try her home-made bread and butter.

My lord relaxed his frown and consented, and, of course, they talked diamond.

He told her, loftily, he must take a studio, and his sitters must come to him, and must no longer expect to be immortalized for 1*l.* It must be 2*l.* for a bust, and 3*l.* for a kitcat.

‘Nay but, my dear,’ said Phœbe, ‘they will pay no more because you have a diamond.’

‘Then they will have to go unpainted,’ said Mr. Falcon.

This was intended for a threat. Phœbe instinctively felt that it might not be so received; she counselled moderation. ‘It is a great thing to have earned a diamond,’ said she: ‘but ’tis only once in a life. Now, be ruled by me: go on just as you are. Sell the diamond, and give me the money to keep for you. Why, you might add a little to it, and so would I, till we made it up 200*l.* And if you could only show 200*l.* you had made and laid by, father would let us marry, and I might keep this shop—it pays well, I can tell you—and keep my gentleman in a sly corner; you need never be seen in it.’

‘Ay, ay,’ said he, ‘that is the small game. But I am a man that have always preferred the big game. I shall set up my studio, and make enough to keep us both. So give me the stone, if you please. I shall take it round to them all, and the rogues won’t get it out of me for a hundred and fifty; why, it is as big as a nut.’

‘No, no, Reginald. Money has always made mischief between you and me. You never had fifty pounds yet, you didn’t fall into temptation. Do pray let me keep it for you; or else sell it—I know how to sell; nobody better—and keep the money for a good occasion.’

‘Is it yours, or mine?’ said he, sulkily.

‘Why yours, dear; you earned it.’

‘Then give it me, please.’ And he almost forced it out of her hand.

So now she sat down and cried over this piece of good luck, for her heart filled with forebodings.

He laughed at her. But, at last, had the grace to console her, and assure her she was tormenting herself for nothing.

‘Time will show,’ said she, sadly.

Time did show.

Three or four days he came, as usual, to laugh her out of her forebodings. But presently his visits ceased. She knew what that meant: he was living like a gentleman, melting his diamond, and playing her false with the first pretty face he met.

This blow, coming after she had been so happy, struck Phœbe Dale stupid with grief. The line on her high forehead deepened; and at night she sat with her hands before her, sighing, and sighing, and listening for the foot-steps that never came.

'Oh, Dick!' she said, 'never you love any one. I am aweary of my life. And to think that, but for that diamond—oh, dear! oh, dear! oh, dear!'

Then Dick used to try and comfort her in his way, and often put his arm round her neck, and gave her his rough but honest sympathy. Dick's rare affection was her one drop of comfort; it was something to relieve her swelling heart.

'Oh, Dick!' she said to him one night, 'I wish I had married him.'

'What, to be ill-used?'

'He couldn't use me worse. I have been wife, and mother, and sweetheart, and all, to him; and to be left like this. He treats me like the dirt beneath his feet.'

'Tis your own fault, Phœbe, partly. You say the word, and I'll break every bone in his carcasse.'

'What, do him a mischief! Why, I'd rather die than harm a hair of his head. You must never lift a hand to him, or I shall hate you.'

'Hate me, Phœbe?'

'Ay, boy: I should. God forgive me: 'tis no use deceiving ourselves; when a woman loves a man she despises, never you

come between them; there's no reason in her love, so it is incurable. One comfort, it can't go on for ever; it must kill me, before my time; and so best. If I was only a mother, and had a little Reginald to dandle on my knee and gloat upon, till he spent his money, and came back to me. That's why I said I wished I was his wife. Oh! why does God fill a poor woman's bosom with love, and nothing to spend it on but a stone; for sure his heart must be one. If I had only something that would let me always love it, a little toddling thing at my knee, that would always let me look at it, and love it, something too young to be false to me, too weak to run away from my long—ing—arms—and—year—ning heart!' Then came a burst of agony, and moans of desolation, till poor Dick blubbered loudly at her grief; and then her tears flowed in streams.

Trouble on trouble. Dick himself got strangely out of sorts, and complained of shivers. Phœbe sent him to bed early, and made him some white wine whey very hot. In the morning he got up, and said he was better; but after breakfast he was violently sick, and suffered several returns of nausea before noon. 'One would think I was poisoned,' said he.

At one o'clock he was seized with a kind of spasm in the throat that lasted so long it nearly choked him.

Then Phœbe got frightened, and sent to the nearest surgeon. He did not hurry, and poor Dick had another frightful spasm just as he came in.

'It is hysterical,' said the surgeon. 'No disease of the heart; is there? Give him a little sal-volatile every half-hour.'

In spite of the sal-volatile these terrible spasms seized him every half-hour; and now he used to spring off the bed with a cry of terror when they came; and each one left him weaker and weaker; he had to be carried back by the women.

A sad, sickening fear seized on Phœbe. She left Dick with the maid, and, tying on her bonnet in a moment, rushed wildly down the street, asking the neighbours for a great doctor, the best that could be had for money. One sent her east a mile, another west; and she was almost distracted, when who should drive up but Doctor and Mrs. Staines, to make purchases. She did not know his name, but she knew he was a doctor. She ran to the window, and cried, 'Oh, doctor, my brother! Oh, pray come to him. Oh! oh!'

Doctor Staines got quickly, but calmly out; told his wife to wait; and followed Phœbe upstairs. She told him, in a few agitated words, how Dick had been taken, and all the symptoms; especially what had alarmed her so, his springing off the bed when the spasm came.

Doctor Staines told her to hold the patient up. He lost not a moment, but opened his mouth resolutely, and looked down.

'The glottis is swollen,' said he: then he felt his hands, and said, with the grave, terrible calm of experience, 'He is dying.'

'Oh, no! no! Oh, doctor, save him! save him!'

'Nothing can save him, unless we had a surgeon on the spot. Yes, I might save him, if you have the courage: opening his windpipe before the next spasm is his one chance.'

'Open his windpipe! Oh, doctor! It will kill him. Let me look at you.'

She looked hard in his face. It gave her confidence.

'Is it the only chance?'

'The only one: and it is flying while we chatter.'

'Do it.'

He whipped out his lancet.

'But I can't look on it. I trust to you and my Saviour's mercy.'

She fell on her knees, and bowed her head in prayer.

Staines seized a basin, put it by the bedside, made an incision in the windpipe, and got Dick down on his stomach, with his face over the bedside. Some blood ran, but not much. 'Now!' he cried, cheerfully, 'a small bellows! There's one in your parlour. Run.'

Phœbe ran for it, and, at Dr. Staines' direction, lifted Dick a little, while the bellows, duly cleansed, were gently applied to the aperture in the windpipe, and the action of the lungs delicately aided by this primitive but effectual means.

He showed Phœbe how to do it, tore a leaf out of his pocket-book, wrote a hasty direction to an able surgeon near, and sent his wife off with it in the carriage.

Phœbe and he never left the patient till the surgeon came with all the instruments required; amongst the rest, with a big, tortuous pair of nippers, with which he could reach the glottis, and snip it. But they consulted, and thought it wiser to continue the surer method; and so a little tube was neatly inserted into Dick's windpipe, and his throat bandaged; and by this aperture he did his breathing for some little time.

Phœbe nursed him like a mother; and the terror and the joy did her good, and made her less desolate.

Dick was only just well when both of them were summoned to the farm, and arrived only just in time to receive their father's blessing and his last sigh.

Their elder brother, a married man, inherited the farm, and was executor. Phœbe and Dick were left 1,500*l.* apiece, on condition of their leaving England and going to Natal.

They knew directly what that meant. Phœbe was to be parted from a bad man; and Dick was to comfort her for the loss.

When this part of the will was read to Phœbe she turned faint, and only her health and bodily vigour kept her from swooning right away.

But she yielded. 'It is the will of the dead,' said she; 'and I will obey it; for, oh, if I had but listened to him more when he was alive to advise me, I should not sit here now, sick at heart and dry-eyed, when I ought to be thinking only of the good friend that is gone.'

When she had come to this she became feverishly anxious to be gone. She busied herself in purchasing agricultural machines, and stores, and even stock; and, to see her pinching the beasts' ribs to find their condition, and parrying all attempts to cheat her, you would never have believed she could be a love-sick woman.

Dick kept her up to the mark. He only left her to bargain with the master of a good vessel; for it was no trifle to take out horses, and cows, and machines, and bales of cloth, cotton, and linen.

When that was settled they came in to town together, and Phœbe bought shrewdly, at wholesale houses in the City, for cash, and would have bargains: and the little shop in — Street was turned into a warehouse.

They were all ardour, as colonists should be; and, what pleased Dick most, she never mentioned Falcon; yet he learned from the maid that worthy had been there twice, looking very seedy.

The day drew near. Dick was in high spirits.

'We shall soon make our fortune out there,' he said: 'and I'll get you a good husband.'

She shuddered, but said nothing.

The evening before they were to sail Phœbe sat alone, in her black dress, tired with work, and asking herself, sick at heart, could she ever really leave England, when the door opened softly, and Reginald Falcon, shabbily dressed, came in, and threw himself into a chair.

She started up, with a scream, then sank down again, trembling, and turned her face to the wall.

'So you are going to run away from me!' said he, savagely.

'Ay, Reginald,' said she, meekly.

'This is your fine love; is it?'

'You have worn it out, dear,' she said, softly, without turning her head.

'I wish I could say as much: but, curse it, every time I leave you I learn to love you more. I am never really happy but when I am with you.'

'Bless you for saying that, dear. I often thought you *must* find that out one day: but you took too long.'

'Oh, better late than never, Phœbe! Can you have the heart to go to the Cape, and leave me all alone in the world, with nobody that really cares for me? Surely you are not obliged to go.'

'Yes; my father left Dick and me 1,500*l.* apiece to go: that was the condition. Poor Dick loves his unhappy sister. He won't go without me—I should be his ruin—poor Dick, that really loves me; and he lay a-dying here, and the good doctor and me—God bless him—we brought him back from the grave. Ah, you little know what I have gone through. You were not here. Catch you being near me when I

am in trouble. There, I must go. I must go. I will go; if I fling myself into the sea half way.'

'And, if you do, I'll take a dose of poison; for I have thrown away the truest heart, the sweetest, most unselfish, kindest, generous —oh! oh! oh!'

And he began to howl.

This set Phœbe sobbing. 'Don't cry, dear,' she murmured, through her tears: 'if you have really any love for me, come with me.'

'What, leave England, and go to a desert?'

'Love can make a desert a garden.'

'Phœbe, I'll do anything else. I'll swear not to leave your side. I'll never look at any other face but yours. But I can't live in Africa.'

'I know you can't. It takes a little real love to go there with a poor girl like me. Ah, well, I'd have made you so happy. We are not poor emigrants. I have a horse for you to ride, and guns to shoot; and me and Dick would do all the work for you. But there are others here you can't leave for me. Well, then, good-bye, dear. In Africa, or here, I shall always love you; and many a salt tear I shall shed for you yet; many a one I have, as well you know. God bless you. Pray for poor Phœbe, that goes against her will to Africa, and leaves her heart with thee.'

This was too much even for the selfish Reginald. He kneeled at her knees, and took her hand, and kissed it, and actually shed a tear or two over it.

She could not speak. He had no hope of changing her resolution: and presently he heard Dick's voice outside; so he got up to avoid him. 'I'll come again in the morning, before you go.'

'Oh no! no!' she gasped. 'Unless you want me to die at your feet. I am almost dead now.'

Reginald slipped out by the kitchen.

Dick came in, and found his sister leaning with her head back against the wall. 'Why, Phœbe,' said he, 'whatever is the matter?' and he took her by the shoulder.

She moaned, and he felt her all limp and powerless.

'What is it, lass? Whatever is the matter? Is it about going away?'

She would not speak for a long time.

When she did speak, it was to say something for which my male reader perhaps may hardly be prepared.

'Oh, Dick—forgive me!'

'Why, what for?'

'Forgive me, or else kill me: I don't care which.'

'I do though. There, I forgive you. Now what's your crime?'

'I can't go. Forgive me!'

'Can't go?'

'I can't. Forgive me!'

'I'm blessed if I don't believe that vagabond has been here tormenting of you again.'

'Oh, don't miscall him. He is penitent. Yes, Dick, he has been here crying to me—and I can't leave him. I can't—I can't. Dear Dick! you are young, and stout-hearted; take all the things over, and make your fortune out there; and leave your poor foolish sister behind. I should only fling myself into the salt sea, if I left him now, and that would be peace to me, but a grief to thee.'

'Lordsake, Phœbe, don't talk so. I can't go without you. And do but think. Why the horses are on board by now, and all the gear. It's my belief a good hiding is all you want, to bring you to your senses; but I han't the heart to give you one, worse luck. Blessed if I know what to say or do.'

'I won't go!' cried Phœbe, turning violent all of a sudden. 'No,

not if I am dragged to the ship by the hair of my head. Forgive me!' And, with that word, she was a mouse again.

'Eh, but women are kittle cattle to drive,' said poor Dick, ruefully. And down he sat at a non-plus, and very unhappy.

Phœbe sat opposite, sullen, heart-sick, wretched to the core; but determined not to leave Reginald.

Then came an event that might have been foreseen, yet it took them both by surprise.

A light step was heard, and a graceful, though seedy, figure entered the room, with a set speech in his mouth: 'Phœbe, you are right. I owe it to your long and faithful affection to make a sacrifice for you. I will go to Africa with you. I will go to the end of the world, sooner than you shall say I care for any woman on earth but you.'

Both brother and sister were so unprepared for this, that they could hardly realize it at first.

Phœbe turned her great, inquiring eyes on the speaker, and it was a sight to see amazement, doubt, hope, and happiness animating her features, one after another.

'Is this real?' said she.

'I'll sail with you to-morrow, Phœbe; and I will make you a good husband, if you will have me.'

'That is spoke like a man,' said Dick. 'You take him at his word, Phœbe; and if he ill-uses you out there, I'll break every bone in his skin.'

'How dare you threaten him?' said Phœbe. 'You had best leave the room.'

Out went poor Dick, with the tear in his eye at being snubbed so. While he was putting up the shutters, Phœbe was making love to her pseudo penitent. 'My dear,'

said she, 'tr'rst yourself to me. You don't know all my love yet; for I have never been your wife, and I would not be your jade; that is the only thing I ever refused you. Trust yourself to me. Why, you never found happiness with others; try it with me. It shall be the best day's work you ever did, going out in the ship with me. You don't know how happy a loving wife can make her husband. I'll pet you out there as man was never petted. And besides, it isn't for life; Dick and me we will soon make a fortune out there, and then I'll bring you home, and see you spend it any way you like but one. Oh, how I love you! do you love me a little? I worship the ground you walk on. I adore every hair of your head!' Her noble arm went round his neck in a moment, and the grandeur of her passion electrified him so far that he kissed her affectionately, if not quite so warmly as she did him: and so it was all settled. The maid was discharged that night, instead of the morning, and Reginald was to occupy her bed. Phœbe went upstairs with her heart literally on fire, to prepare his sleeping-room, and so Dick and Reginald had a word.

'I say, Dick, how long will this voyage be?'

'Two months, sir, I'm told.'

'Please to cast your eyes on this suit of mine. Don't you think it is rather seedy—to go to Africa with? Why, I shall disgrace you on board the ship. I say, Dick, lend me three sovs., just to buy a new suit at the slop shop.'

'Well, brother-in-law,' said Dick, 'I don't see any harm in that. I'll go and fetch them for you.'

What does this sensible Dick do but go up-stairs to Phœbe, and say, 'He wants three pounds to buy a suit; am I to lend it him?'

Phœbe was shaking and patting her penitent's pillow. She dropped it on the bed in dismay. 'Oh, Dick, not for all the world! Why, if he had three sovereigns, he'd desert me at the water's edge. Oh, God help me, how I love him! God forgive me, how I mistrust him! Good Dick! kind Dick! say we have suits of clothes, and we'll fit him like a prince, as he ought to be, on board ship: but not a shilling of money: and, my dear, don't put the weight on me. You understand?'

'Ay, mistress, I understand.'

'Good Dick!'

'Oh, all right: and then, don't you snap this here good, kind Dick's nose off at a word again.'

'Never. I get wild if anybody threatens him. Then I'm not myself. Forgive my hasty tongue. You know I love you, dear!'

'Oh ay: you love me well enough. But seems to me your love is precious like cold veal; and your love for that chap is hot roast beef.'

'Ha! ha! ha! ha!'

'Oh, ye can laugh now, can ye?'

'Ha! ha! ha!'

'Well, the more of that music the better for me.'

'Yes, dear: but go and tell him.'

Dick went down, and said, 'I've got no money to spare, till I get to the Cape; but Phœbe has got a box full of suits, and I made her promise to keep it out. She will dress you like a prince, you may be sure.'

'Oh, that is it, is it?' said Reginald, drily.

Dick made no reply.

At nine o'clock they were on board the vessel; at ten she weighed anchor, and a steam-vessel drew her down the river about thirty miles, then cast off, and left her to the south-easterly

breeze. Up went sail after sail; she nodded her lofty head, and glided away for Africa.

Phœbe shed a few natural tears at leaving the shores of Old England; but they soon dried. She was demurely happy, watching her prize, and asking herself had she really secured it, and all in a few hours?

They had a prosperous voyage: were married at Cape Town, and went up the country, bag and baggage, looking out for a good bargain in land. Reginald was mounted on an English horse, and allowed to zig-zag about, and shoot, and play, while his wife and brother-in-law marched slowly with their cavalcade.

What with air, exercise, wholesome food, and smiles of welcome, and delicious petting, this egotist enjoyed himself finely. He admitted as much. Says he, one evening, to his wife, who sat by him for the pleasure of seeing him feed, 'It sounds absurd: but I never was so happy in all my life.'

At that, the celestial expression of her pastoral face, and the maternal gesture with which she drew her pet's head to her queenly bosom, was a picture for celibacy to gnash the teeth at.

CHAPTER IX.

During this period, the most remarkable things that happened to Doctor and Mrs. Staines, were really those which I have related as connecting them with Phœbe Dale and her brother; to which I will now add that Dr. Staines detailed Dick's case in a remarkable paper, entitled 'Edema of the Glottis,' and showed how the patient had been brought back from the grave by tracheotomy and artificial respiration. He received a high price for this article.

To tell the truth, he was careful

not to admit that it was he who had opened the windpipe; so the credit of the whole operation was given to Mr. Jenkyn; and this gentleman was naturally pleased, and threw a good many consultation fees in Staines' way.

The Lucases, to his great comfort—for he had an instinctive aversion to Miss Lucas—left London for Paris in August, and did not return all the year.

In February he reviewed his year's work and twelve months' residence in the Bijou. The pecuniary result was—outgoings, 950*l.*: income, from fees, 280*l.*; writing, 90*l.*

He showed these figures to Mrs. Staines, and asked her if she could suggest any diminution of expenditure. Could she do with less housekeeping money?

'Oh, impossible! You cannot think how the servants eat: and they won't touch our home-made bread.'

'The fools! Why?'

'Oh, because they think it costs us less. Servants seem to me always to hate the people whose bread they eat.'

'More likely it is their vanity. Nothing that is not paid for before their eyes seems good enough for them. Well, dear, the bakers will revenge us. But is there any other item we could reduce? Dress?'

'Dress! Why I spend nothing.'

'Forty-five pounds this year.'

'Well, I shall want none next year.'

'Well then, Rosa, as there is nothing we can reduce, I must write more, and take more fees, or we shall be in the wrong box. Only 860*l.* left of our little capital; and, mind, we have not another shilling in the world. One comfort, there is no debt. We pay ready money for everything.'

Rosa coloured a little, but said nothing.

Staines did his part nobly. He read; he wrote; he paced the yard; he wore his old clothes in the house. He took off his new ones, when he came in. He was all genius, drudgery, patience.

How Phœbe Dale would have valued him, co-operated with him, and petted him, if she had had the good luck to be his wife!

The season came back, and with it Miss Lucas, towing a brilliant bride, Mrs. Vivian, young, rich, pretty, and gay, with a waist you could span, and athirst for pleasure.

This lady was the first that ever made Rosa downright jealous. She seemed to have everything the female heart could desire; and she was No. 1 with Miss Lucas this year. Now Rosa was No. 1, last season, and had weakly imagined that was to last for ever. But Miss Lucas had always a sort of female flame, and it never lasted two seasons.

Rosa did not care so very much for Miss Lucas before, except as a convenient friend; but now she was mortified to tears at finding Miss Lucas made more fuss with another than with her.

This foolish feeling spurred her to attempt a rivalry with Mrs. Vivian, in the very things where rivalry was hopeless.

Miss Lucas gave both ladies tickets for a flower-show, where all the great folk were to be, princes and princesses, etc.

'But I have nothing to wear,' sighed Rosa.

'Then you must get something, and mind it is not pink, please; for we must not clash in colour. You know I'm dark, and pink becomes me. (The selfish young brute was not half as dark as Rosa.) Mine is coming from Worth's, in Paris, on purpose.'

And this new Madam Cie, of Regent Street, has such a duck of a bonnet, just come from Paris. She wanted to make me one from it; but I told her I would have none but the pattern bonnet—and she knows very well she can't pass a copy off on me. Let me drive you up there; and you can see mine, and order one if you like it.'

'Oh, thank you; let me just run and speak to my husband first.'

Staines was writing for the bare life, and a number of German books about him, slaving to make a few pounds, when in comes the buoyant figure and beaming face his soul delighted in.

He laid down his work, 'to enjoy the sunbeam of love.

'Oh, darling, I've only come in for a minute. We are going to a flower-show on the 13th; everybody will be so beautifully dressed—especially that Mrs. Vivian. I have got ten yards of beautiful blue silk in my wardrobe, but that is not enough to make a whole dress. Everything takes so much stuff now. Madame Cie does not care to make up dresses unless she finds the silk, but Miss Lucas says she thinks, to oblige a friend of hers, she would do it for once in a way. You know, dear, it would only take a few yards more, and it would last as a dinner-dress for ever so long.'

Then she clasped him round the neck, and leaned her head upon his shoulder, and looked lovingly up in his face. 'I know you would like your Rosa to look as well as Mrs. Vivian.'

'No one ever looks as well—in my eyes—as my Rosa. There, the dress will add nothing to your beauty; but go and get it, to please yourself: it is very considerate of you to have chosen something of which you have ten yards already.'

See, dear, I'm to receive twenty pounds for this article; if research was paid, it ought to be a hundred. I shall add it all to your allowance for dresses this year. So no debt, mind; but come to me for everything.'

The two ladies drove off to Madame Cie's, a pretty shop lined with dark velvet and lace draperies.

In the back room they were packing a lovely bridal dress, going off, the following Saturday, to New York.

'What, send from America to London?'

'Oh dear yes!' exclaimed Madame Cie. 'The American ladies are excellent customers. They buy everything of the best, and the most expensive.'

'I have brought a new customer,' said Miss Lucas, 'and I want you to do a great favour, and that is to match a blue silk, and make her a pretty dress for the flower-show on the 13th.'

Madame Cie produced a white muslin polonaise, which she was just going to send home to the Princess ——, to be worn over mauve.

'Oh, how pretty and simple!' exclaimed Miss Lucas.

'I have some lace exactly like that,' said Mrs. Staines.

'Then, why don't you have a polonaise? The lace is the only expensive part, the muslin is a mere nothing; and it is such a useful dress, it can be worn over any silk.'

It was agreed Madame Cie was to send for the blue silk and the lace, and the dresses were to be tried on on Thursday.

On Thursday, as Rosa went gaily into Madame Cie's back room to have the dresses tried on, Madame Cie said, 'You have a beautiful lace shawl, but it wants arranging—in five minutes I could

astonish you with what I could do to that shawl.'

'Oh, pray do,' said Mrs. Staines.

The dressmaker kept her word. By the time the blue dress was tried on, Madame Cie had, with the aid of a few pins, plaits, and a bow of blue ribbon, transformed the half-lace shawl into one of the smartest and most *distingué* things imaginable; but when the bill came in at Christmas, for that five minutes' labour and *distingué* touch, she charged one pound eight.

Madame Cie then told the ladies, in an artfully confidential tone, she had a quantity of black silk coming home, which she had purchased considerably below cost price; and that she should like to make them each a dress—not for her own sake, but theirs—as she knew they would never meet such a bargain again. 'You know, Miss Lucas,' she continued, 'we don't want our money, when we know our customers. Christmas is soon enough for us.'

'Christmas is a long time off,' thought the young wife, 'nearly ten months. I think I'll have a black silk, Madame Cie; but I must not say anything to the Doctor about it just yet, or he might think me extravagant.'

'No one can ever think a lady extravagant for buying a black silk; it's such a useful dress; lasts for ever—almost.'

Days, weeks, and months rolled on, and with them an ever-rolling tide of flower-shows, dinners, at-homes, balls, operas, lawn-parties, concerts, and theatres.

Strange that in one house there should be two people who loved each other, yet their lives ran so far apart, except while they were asleep: the man all industry, self-denial, patience; the woman all frivolity, self-indulgence, and

amusement; both chained to an oar, only one in a working boat, the other in a painted galley.

The woman got tired first, and her charming colour waned sadly. She came to him for medicine to set her up. 'I feel so languid.'

'No, no,' said he; 'no medicine can do the work of wholesome food, and rational repose. You lack the season of all natures, sleep. Dine at home three days running, and go to bed at ten.'

On this the Doctor's wife went to a chemist for advice. He gave her a pink stimulant; and, as stimulants have two effects, viz., first, to stimulate, and then to weaken, this did her no lasting good. Doctor Staines cursed the London season, and threatened to migrate to Liverpool.

But there was worse behind.

Returning one day to his dressing-room, just after Rosa had come down stairs, he caught sight of a red stain in a washhand-basin. He examined it; it was arterial blood.

He went to her directly, and expressed his anxiety.

'Oh, it is nothing,' said she.

'Nothing! Pray how often has it occurred?'

'Once or twice. I must take your advice, and be quiet, that is all.'

Staines examined the house-maid; she lied instinctively at first, seeing he was alarmed; but, being urged to tell the truth, said she had seen it repeatedly, and had told the cook.

He went down stairs again, and sat down, looking wretched.

'Oh dear!' said Rosa. 'What is the matter now?'

'Rosa,' said he, very gravely, 'there are two people a woman is mad to deceive—her husband and her physician. You have deceived both.'

(To be continued.)

‘GARETH AND LYNETTE.’

IN forming an estimate of any work, it is necessary to consider that at which it aims. It is as wrong to criticise what is only intended to be mediocre, on the assumption that it aims at excellence, as it is to compare that which is intended to be first-class with any other than a first-class standard. In judging of a prime minister, it is no palliation of his shortcomings to say that he would have made a good under-secretary. Similarly, in determining the merit of a literary work, we cannot forget the degree of excellence which is claimed for it.

Mr. Tennyson's admirers have always claimed for him a place in the first rank of English poets. He has been compared by them with the greatest of past generations, and the comparison has been declared not unfavourable to him. He has always seemed to aim at a very high ideal. In an age when the income obtainable by literature is greater than it ever has been, Mr. Tennyson has shown not the slightest inclination to yield to the temptation to prefer a lucrative to an admirable career. He has only to put his pen to paper to make a considerable sum. He can get more for a short lyric than was given for ‘Paradise Lost;’ yet he can never be accused of writing too much. His works are produced slowly, and at intervals. Far from pouring forth volume after volume with a lavishness which would undoubtedly result in the realisation of large wealth, not necessarily at the expense of fame, he has been almost stingy of his sweetness, and has seemed to aim at elaborate perfection, rather than at easy and abounding brilliance.

Whether or not posterity will accord to him the high place which his admirers now claim for him is a question into which I do not wish to enter. It suffices that the fact of their claim makes it necessary to judge whatever he produces by an exceedingly high standard. His poems ought to be not only free from positive faults, but of exalted artistic merit. In all, therefore, that I may say in this paper as to his last work, I would wish it borne in mind that I am comparing it with a very lofty ideal. And if I am forced to ascribe to it a deterioration, as compared with what Mr. Tennyson has already produced, or what he is considered able to produce, I do not for a moment wish to deny that it has, very undoubtedly, great excellence.

From a preface to the ‘Holy Grail’ we learn that ‘The Passing of Arthur,’ called in the earlier edition ‘Mort d’Arthur’ (a title manifestly inferior to that chosen later), was connected with the rest, in accordance with an early project of the author’s. We have a glimpse of this project in the original introduction to ‘Mort d’Arthur:’

“‘ You know,’ said Frank, “he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve
books.””

And later:

“‘ These twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing
worth,
Mere chaff and draft, much better
burnt.” “But I,”
Said Francis, “pick’d the eleventh from
this hearth.””

From this it would seem as if Mr. Tennyson contemplated, from the first, the possibility, at least, of an epic in twelve books on the

Arthurian legends. This idea has been gradually carried out, and at present we have ten consecutive books, 'The Coming of Arthur,' 'Gareth and Lynette,' 'Geraint and Enid,' 'Merlin and Vivien,' 'Lancelot and Elaine,' 'The Holy Grail,' 'Pelleas and Etarre,' 'The Last Tournament,' 'Guinevere,' and 'The Passing of Arthur.' The latter has been described as the eleventh book, from which we might infer that a twelfth is to be added, and a complementary book inserted among the earlier poems of the series. Whether this plan will be effected or not must be a mere conjecture; as must the subject of the final poem, though we have a hint of a possible subject in the concluding verses of 'Elaine,' where

'So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.'

And 'Guinevere' and 'The Passing of Arthur' suggest others; but, even if the whole work were left as it now is, it would by no means lack completeness.

As compared with the earlier books of the epic, both 'Gareth and Lynette' and 'The Last Tournament' are much wanting in artistic grace. In the latter, not only has the high purity which is the motive of the poem failed, not only has the sin of Guinevere brought pollution in Arthur's court—so that

'All courtesy is dead.
The glory of our Round Table is no more;'

but the purity and sweetness of the manner in which the story is told has given way to coarseness, which, however characteristic of the subject matter, is not artistic. Take the following passage in 'The Last Tournament':

'But on the hither side of that lewd morn,
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage ribbed
From ear to ear with dog-whip weals,
his nose
Bridge-broken, one eye out and one hand off,
And one with shattered fingers dangling lame,
A churl, to whom indignantly the king :
"My churl, for whom Christ died, what evil beast
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face? or fiend?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image in thee thus?"
Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of splintered teeth
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with blunt stump,
Pitch-blackened, sawing the air, said the maim'd churl,'

Or this:

'"The teeth of hell flay bare and gnash thee flat!
Lo, art thou not that eunuch-hearted king
Who fain had clipt free manhood from the world—
The woman-worshipper? Yea, gods curse and I!
Slain was the brother of my paramour
By a knight of thine, and I that heard her whine
And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists in hell
And stings itself to everlasting death,
To hang whatever knight of thine I fought
And tumbled."'

Is there not a grossness of language and imagery (in the last passage almost revolting) which cannot be excused on the ground that it is emblematic of the grossness of the age which it describes? It is, of course, true that evil should be made abhorrent, but this effect should not be produced by the heaping together of epithets, similes, and descriptions better adapted to a modern Billingsgate than the court of Arthur. The scene, too, in 'The Last Tournament' between Tristrem and Isolt is repulsive. It may, indeed, be fairly argued

that guilty love should never be made attractive, but to mix up the insolence and coarseness of Tristrem with any feeling even called love is an error. To read 'The Last Tournament' after 'The Passing of Arthur,' 'Elaine,' or 'Guinevere,' makes one ask how Gainsborough would have succeeded if he had adopted the style of Hogarth. So, also, in 'Gareth and Lynette,' the petulance of Lynette takes such perpetual refuge in allusions to carrion and foulness that one is inclined to follow her example, and

'Nip one's nose
With petulant finger, shrilling, "Hence
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-
grease."'

There is an entire absence of the wondrous beauty of word and measure which graces 'The Passing of Arthur' and 'Guinevere.' An unrefined and eminently unpoetical materialism has taken the place of the pure idealism of the earlier books. It may, indeed, be contended that this is intentional. If it be so, I am inclined to think that a poem which displays such incongruities, and which lays so much stress on the bad side of the scenes and characters which it describes, can never bear the high reputation which Mr. Tennyson's admirers have claimed for his treatment of the Arthurian legend.

'Gareth and Lynette,' the last published of all the books before us, deals with an early period of the history of the Table Round. But it is impossible to help thinking that the critic of after times will need no external evidence to satisfy him that it was one of the last written. Glimpses we have, here and there, of Mr. Tennyson's wondrous power, and tastes of his exquisite sweetness; but the powerful is marred by the weak, and the sweet by the bitter. The matter of the poem is less attractive

than that of its predecessors, and the manner in which it is laid before us is even more open to objection. And first of the matter.

It is a common fault in criticism to assign to an author much that he never intended to convey. But, in saying that Tennyson's poems, and especially his Arthurian epic, are allegorical, I do not think that a critic is open to be accused of this fault. In narrating certain mythical actions, Mr. Tennyson appears to aim at representing more than the mere course of knightly prowess. If this be a true judgment, and if the work is not to have a conclusion, which is yet wanting, I am more than ever inclined to lament the utter collapse of the Table Round. It seemed, from the earlier books, that, even if the optimist views of Arthur's court, to which one would cling most gladly, could not be maintained, they would at least not yield to pessimism. But the breakdown of all that is good is so thorough, as we see the end as yet, that one regrets that so fair an edifice was built only to be torn into so ghastly a ruin. I repeat that I am only judging of what is before us. Guinevere's repentance is an accomplished fact. That of Lancelot is, as we have seen, hinted at. And it may be that at Avilion may be gathered together after the apotheosis, if I may call it so, of Arthur, a transcendental table round of those who have conquered all their enemies, even death. But the salient point of the poem, as we have it, is the utter failure of virtue to oust vice, and the complete triumph of evil over good.

'Gareth and Lynette' is, if any of the books are, allegorical. It occupies, as we have seen, an early place in the legend, and as yet the defeat of virtue is not matured, indeed is scarcely begun. Gareth,

a royal youth, with high ambition
of eager boyhood,

‘Discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great sun of glory, and thence
swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash
them dead,’

is restrained at home by his mother's love, and at last is only allowed to have his wish of going to Arthur's court disguised as a scullion, whence he submits obediently and without murmur to the harassing supervision of the gross ‘Sir Kay, the seneschal.’ In man's effort after good, the earliest difficulty to which he is subjected is that of being misunderstood. His motives and his character are suspected, and himself treated with contumely and scorn, till, but that his purpose is firm, he would fain turn back from his onward course. After a period of service far shorter than that which he undertook, the mother of Gareth relents; Gareth's identity is made known to the king; and ere long, still in the character of the scullion, he is sent on a knightly quest. If man's motives are true they are sure, sooner or later, to become known and appreciated by those whose judgment is of most value; though even then they may be misinterpreted by others. Sir Gareth—he is secretly knighted by the King—is assigned the duty of following a maiden whose sister is imprisoned in a castle by four knights, of which

‘Three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a
fourth,
And of that four the mightiest, holds
her stay'd
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will and make her wed
with him.

Three of these,
Proud in their fantasy, call themselves
the Day,
Morning-star, and Noon-sun, and Evening-
star,

Being strong fools; and never a whit
more wise,
The fourth, who alway rideth armed in
black,
He names himself the Night, and oftener
Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a
skull,
And has a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or 'scape
the three,
Slain by himself shall enter endless
night.’

These, as we are afterwards told, typify the ‘war of time against the soul of man.’ Sir Gareth overcomes the three, one after another, having the most desperate battle with the Star of Even, during which

‘He seemed as one
That all in later sadder age begins
To war against ill-uses of a life.
But these from all his life arise and
cry,
Thou hast made us lords and canst not
put us down.’

The aspect of the fourth is terrible; his monstrous appearance, the dread silence he maintains, the mysterious incomprehensibility which surrounds him, all ‘set the horror higher,’ and are aptly allegorical of death. The scene at this point is worked up with great dramatic power, and there the sublime runs no risk whatever of being merged into the ridiculous. The awe-inspiring appearance of the monster is such

‘That ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm
blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him*
were aghast.’

Undauntedly, however, Sir Gareth does him battle, and, splitting first his crest and then his helm, sees

‘Out from this
Issue the bright face of a blooming
boy.’

* Mr. Tennyson's accuracy of grammar in this poem has been attacked, and in this passage the word ‘him’ is open to serious objection, as referring by position to Sir Lancelot or Sir Gareth, by intention to the black knight.

At first sight, this conception is very pleasing. Death, if braved and encountered, is not a terrible, awful foe, but is graceful, pleasing, and gentle. This is very taking. But, on closer examination, it is different from and less logical than the general representation of death. In the usual language of metaphor, death is the conqueror — albeit that his victory is turned into peace. 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?' Death is irresistible, overthrowing all alike. His grasp is inevitable, his power relentless, and not to be evaded. That death should be overcome, and appear as a child, appears to involve a confusion of metaphor. It is, indeed, true that death is but a renewal of life, and that the child is father of the man, but to represent death as a pseudo-warrior who is easily overthrown, and becomes a timorous boy pleading for mercy for his weakness, is a bold, but, I venture to think, untenable conception.

Briefly, then, this is the allegory. The doer of good, misinterpreted, scorned, and reviled, overcomes the opposition of the morning, noon, and eventide of his life, nor then is free, but is met by, and has to encounter, death, whom, conquering, he discovers to be, not a monster, but a fair friend. Is this a great conception? Fair and pure it undoubtedly is, and as such in contrast perhaps with the underlying framework of one or two of the Arthurian idylls—notably, as we have seen, of 'The Last Tournament.' But is it such that the future readers of the poetry of this generation will look upon 'Gareth and Lynette' as embodying a high or large idea?

'Vex not then the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit;
Vex not then the poet's mind;
For thou canst not fathom it.'

I know and respect the advice; but there is nothing easier than to lay claim to profoundness, nothing more difficult than to be profound. Moreover—

'Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.'

All the best poems are remarkable for this, that, though a deep vein of allegorical meaning underlies them, the value of that which appears is never made to give place to the allegory. The beauty of the ideas, philosophical or otherwise, in Shakespeare and Milton, is never sacrificed to the necessities of allegorical teaching. Each passage is perfect in itself, even though it has a direct bearing on the allegory. 'This is not the case in 'Gareth and Lynette.' Though the conception is not a very high one, yet, if we take away the allegory, the poem loses more than half its value. There is a great lack of passages beautiful in themselves, independently of their bearing on the poem. There is nothing which sends the blood thrilling through the veins with the exquisite pleasure produced by the speech to the fallen Queen in 'Guinevere,' the lake scene in 'The Passing of Arthur,' or the death of Elaine. I will not say the book is commonplace, because Mr. Tennyson's genius is sufficient to save it from that, and here and there we have flashes of it; but it is not the thing of beauty which it might perhaps have been made.

The play of the book centres in the two characters from which it takes its name. Bellicent, Lancelot, and the King appear for a brief space on the stage, but have little importance. The chivalry of Lancelot is not yet marred by the foul ingratitude which disgraces him in the more advanced portions of the series. Bellicent

is simply a fond, foolish mother, of whom, happily, we see little. The King is a vague, almost shadowy, administrator of justice, whose action in this volume barely affects our general conception of his character as given by Mr. Tennyson. The three knights are set up under such circumstances that we know they will inevitably be knocked down. And Sir Kay is an unreal foil to Gareth's refinement.

Of the two chief actors, Gareth commands our admiration up to a certain point. He has the attributes, common to all Mr. Tennyson's knights, of obedience, courtesy, and strength, but of neither in any very great degree. The first is tried by his submission to his mother's rule, and his labours under Sir Kay, the seneschal. But it must be observed that to his mother Gareth yields an obedience which is most unwilling, and his desire for deeds of high emprise is marked by a selfish disregard of her love which scarcely belongs to a high character; while to Sir Kay he only is obedient for a chief portion of the stipulated time, and he tosses away his bonds with contumely and scorn, with a haste which marks him to be not one of Arthur's noblest, for we are told in 'Guinevere'

'That none of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn.'

His courtesy is displayed in the unmoved manner in which he listens to Lynette's extraordinary abuse; but when he says

"Good sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half man,
nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish
heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness!"

he expresses a disregard for all that a woman may say, of which

the courtesy is at least open to question.

His courage is undoubted, and his strength—even for his enormous height—is apparently great, but he owes his victory over the second knight, or Noonday Sun, to the accident of a horse slipping, and not to any prowess of his own. There is, however, something very admirable in the good-humour with which he refuses to be terrified by the mysterious fourth knight.

"Wonders ye have done,
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow
In having flung the three; I see thee
maim'd,
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling
the fourth."
"And wherefore, damsel? Tell me all
ye know,
Ye cannot scare me; nor rough face, or
voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless
savagery
Appal me from the quest."

And, again, when

"Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry,
Where one might meet a mightier than
himself,"

he replies:

"Here be rules. I know but one—
To dash against mine enemy and to
win."

And his persistence in refusing to be angered by the petulance of Lynette is graceful, until marred by his declaration that he cared not what she said.

In Lynette we have a character which at least has one merit to commend it—that of originality. Even in her appearance—

"A brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-
blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender
nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower"—

we have at least an epithet which is quite new. Let those who have hitherto made the upward curve of one of their features a cause for

regret rejoice that they may call their noses 'Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.' Mr. Tennyson deserves the thanks of many a love-lorn swain who hitherto has had to fall back on the ungraceful word *retroussé*, if he wanted to describe the feature with which his love has so often expressed her rejection of his suit.

Nor is the character of Lynette less remarkable than her appearance. Angered by what she holds the madness of the King in sending his scullion knave, instead of Lancelot, to aid her in her need, she wrathfully and peevishly reviles him as he rides:

"Thou
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!—
to me
Thou smeltest all of kitchen as before."

She calls him

"A villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing woman's
wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

She harps on the same string over and over again, shouting to him that he is knight-knave and knave-knight, that he knows nought of birds save that

"These be for the snare
(So runs thy fancy), these be for the
spit,
Larding and basting."

And she uses the most ungraceful metaphors to express her abhorrence of his presence. Suddenly, however, in a way which would have been impossible to any but such an unmaidenly maiden, she tells him she loves him. After he has slain the first knight, she sings to him:

"O morning star (not that tall felon
there,
Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness,
Or some device, hast foully overthrown),
O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven
true:
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath
smiled on me."

The general idea is that a 'lassie should na' woo,' even when she does it in the extraordinarily unladylike fashion adopted by Lynette. But when the second knight has fallen—not before Sir Gareth's spear, but because his horse slipped—she sings again:

"O sun that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath
smiled on me."

And, later, she blushes not to declare her affection openly to Lancelot. Surely she could scarcely have been lovable. In the poem, too, we have not one expression on the part of Sir Gareth—even after his identity is known—which argues any affection on his part for her, except it be when he says:

"And seeing now thy words are fair,
methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his
great self,
Hath force to quell me."

When, therefore, we consider the scornful and unwomanly language of Lynette, and Gareth's utter indifference, we are inclined to wonder that Mr. Tennyson modified the legend.

"For he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he that told it later says Lynette."

The language of the poem is very unequal; the above lines, which end the book, are almost prosaic, and there is a hard, unmusical ring about many others which is not usual in Mr. Tennyson. The indiscriminate use of 'ye' and 'thou,' often in the same passage, the employment of 'or' as synonymous with 'nor,' or such substantives as 'frights to my heart,' are not in accordance with the grammatical care and correctness shown in his earlier works.

But perhaps the most remarkable point about the manner of Gareth and Lynette, as opposed to

the matter, is the change which Mr. Tennyson's views appear to have undergone as to metre. Nothing is more admirable in his blank verse, as we have hitherto seen it, than the way in which he produces great variety of effect without any overbold infringement of the simple rules of prosody. It is often urged by some persons that there are no rules of prosody in English which cannot be broken with advantage. The opposite view is by them held to be mere little-minded pedantry.

'But most by numbers judge a poet's song,
And smooth or rough, with them is right or wrong.
In the bright muse, though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire,'

is their theory. But, without being one of the multitude who

'Scit tendere viasum
Non secus ac si oculo rubricam dirigat
uno,'

I am inclined to maintain that elegance and beauty of language and rhythm, in accordance with rule, is better than elegance without rule. As in music, great composers sometimes break the laws of harmony, so in poesy great writers often throw over the rules of prosody. But these infractions are, and ought to be, exceptional. In all ages the greatest poets have faithfully followed the ordinary laws of composition, and, though they have on certain occasions gracefully avoided them, they have made such avoidance rare. In his earlier idylls Mr. Tennyson's verse is highly melodious and utterly free from wearying monotony, yet it is in entire agreement with the rules of scansion. Mr. Tennyson, moreover, has always appeared to think that the English language is capable of much prosodaical exactness. In an attempt

to reproduce the hendecasyllabic measure of Catullus in English, he has succeeded in a most beautiful way in following the metre without forcing the language:

'Oh, you chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible indolent reviewers,
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullers.
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to
tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.'

These lines are as elegant and yet as exact as the duodecasyllabic blank verse of 'Guinevere,' 'Enid,' or 'Elaine.'

In 'Gareth and Lynette,' however, we have a great change. I have expressed an opinion that there is a hard, unmusical ring in many of the lines of the poem which is most unusual in Mr. Tennyson. This may be as difficult to demonstrate as it would be to prove that the music of the 'Messiah' is more beautiful than that of an university graduate's composition. But, in saying that several lines in 'Gareth and Lynette' offend the laws of scansion, which in other books Mr. Tennyson carefully follows, I am saying that which can be proved by instances, and which I will, therefore, give a few instances to prove. Now, though the rules as to long syllables and short syllables are totally different from those which govern Greek and Latin, a marked difference nevertheless exists between the relative values of syllables in a verse. Call them long, short and common, light, heavy and medium, or emphatic, unemphatic and simple, as you will, the fact remains, that the employment of one for another is faulty. 'Perfect,' the adjective, and 'perfect,' the verb, could no more be used indiscriminately than 'pilus,' a hair, and 'pilus,' a battalion, could in Latin. The accent, quantity, or

weight of syllables in English is entirely conventional, as is proved by the words 'amazon' and 'orator,' but certain conventional laws do exist, which ought not to be broken. If, therefore, in the few words which I shall say on the prosody of 'Gareth and Lynette' before I close this paper, I use the classical terms trochee, iambic, and tribach, I do so not in ignorance of the difference in the laws as to syllables to which I have referred.

A succession of perfect iambic lines, without any modification, would be wearisome. Mr. Tennyson, therefore, following the example of all writers of blank iambic verse, uses certain modifications with great effect. One of the most common of these is the substitution of a trochee instead of an iambus in the first foot of a line. One of the most spirited poems of Lord Byron begins:

'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea.'

And one of Mr. Tennyson's finest passages:

'Liest thou there so low, the child of one
I honoured, happy, dead before thy shame?'

But it has generally been held that the first is the only foot in which a trochee is elegant. In 'Gareth and Lynette' we have trochees in all the odd places—

'Follow the deer, follow the Christ the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong,
follow the King.'

'Gareth awhile lingered. The mother's eye'—

the irregularity of which scarcely produces pleasure.

Another modification is the

substitution of a tribach, or three very light syllables, for an iambus—

'And a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made him move'—

where the change is elegant.

In 'Gareth' this plan is abnormally extended—

'How he went down, said Gareth, as a false knight.'

'Linger with vacillating obedience.'

'There met him drawn, and overthrew him again.'

'That maddened her and away she flash'd again.'

'Thou art but a wild goose to question it'—

'His horse thereon stumbled—ay, for I saw it.'

where every sort of foot is employed for the iambus, are passages such as we may vainly seek in the earlier and, as I think, more polished of Mr. Tennyson's poems. It may be urged that it is not fair to take single lines; that each line has its value in reference to those which precede and follow it, and that, as a discord is acceptable in music, so a rough line may be acceptable in poesy. But the answer to this is, that, though roughness may be acceptable, lines which so grievously offend as those I have quoted cannot.

More instances might be selected of inharmonious versification, but I have mentioned enough to prove that Mr. Tennyson does not in his last work think it necessary to adhere as closely to the rules of prosody as he did formerly. If the Arthurian legend is to be completed by two more books, I certainly hope that the two which are yet to come will be more conspicuous for depth of thought and beauty of language than either 'The Last Tournament' or 'Gareth and Lynette.'

COURTENAY BOYLE.

BRIMSTONE AND TREACLE.

THE servants of private individuals often have cause to complain of the whims or capriciousness of their employers; but it would be a mistake to suppose that we writers are altogether independent in our work. If we would retain the esteem of our master, the Public, we must carefully follow the changes of what is called his opinion; and frequently we are amazed to find him call for a sudden spasm of energy against certain crimes or criminals whose proceedings are at other times regarded with comparative indifference. Papists, garroters, republicans, baby-farmers, have all within the memory of man taken their turn in the public pillory; the government and its agents have always been standing dishes; and of late we have found railway directors very convenient to fall back upon in dull seasons, inasmuch as they afford a good deal of sport for public indignation, and neither receive much injury nor excite much sympathy.

But last November a daily paper was successful in starting a new kind of game, and had a pretty smart run over grounds that have hitherto been kept closed to the public. It was discovered that at one of our most illustrious public schools the somewhat copious thrashing of the younger boys by the elder ones formed no inconsiderable part of the system of instruction; and upon this, and upon school discipline generally, an excited controversy took place, and the journal in question waxed so hot as to issue a proclamation for the total abolition of the rod, as a last remnant of barbarism unworthy to exist in an age when its leading articles had superseded

the precepts of Solomon and such like antiquated sages.

From this correspondence, and from other sources of information, I learned that two quite opposite opinions were enthusiastically held on the point in dispute. The one was that beating is in all cases beneficial for small boys, that they rather enjoy it than otherwise, and that when they grow into big boys they are almost invariably found eminently qualified to dispense this discipline to their juniors. The other opinion was, that little boys, when they are naughty, may indeed be sent to bed, but are on no account to be whipped, or they will certainly lose all sense of dignity, honour, and self-respect; furthermore, that the lives of boys who live under the rod are a burden to them, and that boys or men inflicting it can scarcely but be cruel, unjust, and generally odious. On the whole, the British public, through the mouth of its guide, philosopher, and friend, the 'Daily Telegraph,' seems to pronounce itself in favour of the latter opinion, while the former appears to be held in more regard by schoolmasters, many of whom, indeed, cling to the cane as tenaciously as the clergy to the Athanasian Creed. And when we consider how nearly the damnatory clauses of the latter have been submerged by the current of public opinion, we can have little doubt what is likely to be the fate of the former means of grace, unless the tide changes. Brimstone, exhibited in treacle or otherwise, may or may not be an useful and inexpensive medicine, but since the publication of 'Nicholas Nickleby,' we are confident that scarcely one school-dame in a hundred has

ventured to administer it to her young charges; and, in the same manner, the majority of schoolmasters have become exceedingly cautious, if not entirely abstinent, in the use of that metaphorical brimstone which formed so large a part of Mr. Squeers' educational system. And then, if we are to believe certain Cassandras of the day, we are ruining the moral and mental digestion of the next generation, seeing that we are feeding them too much upon treacle, which is a pleasant but unwholesome form of nourishment.

I should like to ask the public to put away sentiment and prejudice, and consider with me the whole question of Brimstone and Treacle—which is the more useful in education? in what proportion should they be combined, and in what manner administered? But it would be impossible to treat these inquiries exhaustively in a single paper, and I would rather confine myself to the discussion of the properties and application of that particular form of brimstone which has excited far more controversy than the general question, though it is really far less important. I hope thus to be of some service to anxious and doubtful mothers who are uncertain whether to send their sons to be 'tunded' at Winchester, or to be 'treated like members of the family' by Dr. H. U. M. Norfolk Howard, Ph.D., who supplies his pupils with unlimited diet and no corporal punishment. We will leave girls out of the inquiry; their case was treated two or three years ago in a manner which it is not desirable to imitate.

In the good old times brimstone was held in great esteem by the members of more than one profession. 'Drug,' said the doctor; 'Drub,' said the dominie; and the

divine, too, frequently said something else beginning with a D. It was no wonder that our juvenile forefathers crept unwillingly to school in those days, seeing that they bled as freely under the lash of the schoolmaster as afterwards under the lancet of the surgeon. We were horrified to learn through the 'Daily Telegraph,' that one gentleman had received a hundred and sixty thrashings in the course of his education at Winchester; but in 'Don Quixote' we read of 'three thousand three hundred lashes, which there is not a wretched schoolboy but receives every month.' Ascham tells us of boys running away from Eton for fear of its severities. Dr. Busby was wont to claim many eminent men of his day as the blossoms of his rod. In the pages of Smollett, Fielding, Marryat, and Dickens we have abundant evidence as to the rigour of scholastic discipline; and some of us, even under the mild sceptre of Victoria, are old enough to have had experiences of our own which may serve for a sample of the past. These experiences, however, do not always seem to have excited much vindictiveness; and even such a humane writer as Hood is found speaking kindly enough of the 'wholesome anguish' shed upon him in his boyhood.

But there were never wanting Molières to condemn the severities of other professions, and schoolmasters did not wield their weapons with universal consent. In the same book where we find Dr. Sangrado held up to ridicule, we read of a robber who ascribed his ruin to the fact that his indulgent parents would never let him be whipped; Steele, if I mistake not, writes most forcibly in the 'Spectator' against the prevalent barbarity of schools; and Fuller tells us of 'cockering' mothers who, in

his time, gave money to the master that he might spare the rod and spoil the child. Divines have, as a rule, been found to agree with Solomon on this point; novelists have been prone to the opposite view, as Thwackum and Squeers testify. And since novelists have become preachers a complete reaction has taken place in the public mind, and in education, as in medicine and theology, brimstone is more and more coming to be held harmful.

Sympathizing, on the whole, with the anti-brimstone party, and heartily anathematizing every man who, for his own profit or pleasure, administers unnecessary misery or medicine to man or boy, I may be allowed to reason with the public sentiment, and point out that it is running too fast to an extreme, and may some day rebound to another extreme, against which it may be equally one's duty to protest. We are in the right to long for health, to look forward to the day when no drugs shall be needful for us; but as long as human nature is what it is, so long shall we be unable to dispense altogether with medicines. And the medicine which has hitherto been supposed suitable for schoolboys is more wholesome and pleasant than seems to be generally believed.

The materialistic tendencies of the day are probably to blame for the excessive horror with which we have come to regard bodily pain and bodily punishment. There is one crime which we treat with special rigour, and one punishment which we reserve for it as especially formidable and degrading. With comparative impunity, a scoundrel may steal my purse, tamper with my shares, forge my name, asperse my character, wound my honour, seduce my child; but if, led by a more evil star, he go

so far as to lay a finger on my sacred windpipe, he is handed over to the whipping-post without benefit of 'Daily Telegraph.' And even then he will not be without sympathizers. The stripes which St. Paul gloried in are considered by some to be an unworthy torture for such an admirable product of modern civilization as Mr. Bill Sykes.

Now, schoolboys, however unenlightened on some points, hold on this matter a doctrine which to some people seems more sensible and more Christian. A boy who would scorn to sell adulterated toffee to a friend, or to escape punishment by hiring a lawyer to deceive his judges, or to hide his selfishness under a cloak of decorous piety, does not think himself in the least degraded by being flogged when he is found in a fault. If such a punishment be inflicted kindly and wisely, and not without reason, the thought will probably never cross his mind that he is being treated cruelly, but, on the contrary, he will recognize that it has been given him for what his elders believe to be his good, and will resolve, with more or less firmness, not to deserve it again. Nay, more, if, as will sometimes happen in this world of mistakes, he be punished unjustly, the chances are that he will not sulk or grumble long, but may actually be found trying to take it as patiently and manfully as may be, and, when the smart has passed away, will feel no shame, unless he has allowed himself to howl like a garotter, and little or no resentment, except perhaps for three minutes. I am not speaking of peculiar cases or peculiar boys, but I am sure that the majority of English public schoolboys meet these accidents of juvenile existence in a spirit which may seem foreign to the

snug, selfish, indulgent morality so much in fashion at present, but which has been highly recommended by the precepts of a certain religion preached a long time ago by people who thought little of their bodies and a great deal of another part of the human organization.

In the eyes of some enthusiastic *laudatores temporis acti*, distance lends such enchantment to every view of youth, that they declare that being thrashed was almost an enjoyable incident of their school days. We smile at this absurdity, but we may well consider if there be not a germ of truth in it. It seems probable enough that the possible and not too imminent danger of being eaten by a lion or beaten by a cane does give a certain zest and interest to existence, which we can scarcely understand who are accustomed to handle no more deadly weapon than a razor, and from day to day make peaceful tramway journeys under the watchful care of the metropolitan police. One thing is certain, that to most boys the rule of the rod is not so grievous as that of impositions and tasks which appears to be succeeding it, and waxing stronger and stronger under the fostering influence of competitive examinations. The British public which has been so eager to rescue its boy from Squeers, is found willing enough to hand him over to Blimber, and looks upon his sufferings at the hands of that dignified pedagogue with wonderful apathy, inasmuch, probably, as they cannot be seen or heard so as to shock our overwrought sensitiveness to bodily pain. Writing lines and 'keeping in,' and such like fashionable punishments, do not indeed leave marks or cause groans, but, with less deterrent effect, they are a greater trial to young elastic

spirits; and the British boy in nine cases out of ten would rather have a few thunderbolts now and then, and have done with it, than live in an atmosphere charged with a dull, heavy, headache cloud of fault-finding and task-setting. The tenth case is that of the exceptional boy, who is, or has been, taught that he is of a peculiarly sensitive and shrinking nature, and should be educated at home or at some special school where it may be possible to provide for his disposition and prepare him in some special manner to encounter the ordinary rude shocks of grown-up life. And, again, in nine out of ten of such cases, I believe that this sensitiveness can be strengthened and tempered, not by cruelty or indulgence, but by wise, kind, and judicious management.

Of course it is possible to break a boy's spirit, and even his temper, by constant and severe chastisement; *ne quid nimis* must be our rule in this, as in everything. Is there a man whose spirit would not be broken by his having to fill up an income-tax paper every day of his life? All that is to be contended for is that the rod of our school-days is not, as some people seem to think, one of the worst evils of life which fall upon us, either then or when we are grown up. To be caned is unpleasant, but it is not so bad as to be bilious, or to be in debt. The birch was bitter and made sitting down a matter of discomfort, but it was nothing to the sting of that review in the 'Weekly Scourge,' and the difficulty one had in holding up one's head for a week afterwards, till custom hardened the skin in some degree to both inflictions. It was dreadful to hear the polite formula with which Dr. Busbison requested the honour of a business interview; but, oh! it

was a thousand times worse to hear that one's first darling article was *declined with thanks*. Did we ever think the pain more sharp and terrible than a single reproachful word from one whom we loved and honoured above all on earth? Do we think it worse than the thousand dull cares and sorrowful regrets which now meet us at every turn in life's pathway, and are not to be shaken off in a game of play, or, at worst, in a night of sleep? These boyish bruises which we speak of as so cruel are healed in a few hours; we receive wounds which are not skinned over for years, and of some sins we carry the smart to the grave, nay, leave it as an inheritance to our children's children. Sorely and surely are we all punished in the school of life, in which we only rise to become more our own most severe judges and our own most cruel correctors; and in a sick, restless, weary, discontented age, do we never long to be able to put penance, repentance, and absolution into a few moments of smarting and a few minutes of tears?

I believe, then, that we altogether exaggerate the harshness of the old-fashioned discipline, and call out against its cruelty with an unnecessary vehemence which were better directed against our own indulgence. In the case of some this zeal proceeds from ignorance of the nature of boys; with others from natural timidity, the effect of excessive severity used towards themselves in youth. But most of us, knowing well how we have been saved from bad actions and bad habits by punishment or the fear of punishment, take the indulgent view from a mere lazy acquiescence with that feature of the spirit of the age to which allusion has already been made, and would carry into the government of the rising genera-

tion the same weakness which makes us shudder to hear that slaves are being beaten and manacled on the coast of Zanzibar, while we are little troubled to know that free-born women are being daily driven into starvation, misery, and prostitution in the streets of London.

Here must be noticed a strange inconsistency of public opinion, which for years has been setting strongly against schoolmasters who follow the precepts of Solomon, but has winked at the existence in certain schools of what seems a far more unreasonable form of tyranny. Lately a case of gross injustice, however, has called attention to the fact, that, in certain schools, the elder boys have, and exercise, a far greater power of chastisement than their superiors; and we have had the cruelties of prefects and prepostors exhibited in all the forcible and gushing eloquence of the correspondents of the 'Daily Telegraph.' No doubt there is something wrong here. If grown-up men, with cooler judgment and greater experience, cannot be said never to make mistakes, it is to be feared that youths of eighteen are scarcely more fit to exercise the combined function of witness, magistrate, and executioner; and little is to be said against the proposal that the ground ashes of our scholastic groves be used in less profusion than has sometimes been the case. But those who have passed through the system of Winchester and Rugby are found to uphold it with a zeal which mere conservatism does not altogether account for; and when the first blush of surprise and indignation has passed away, even outsiders may see that here, as elsewhere, there are two sides to a question. The strongest argument against corporal punishment

is that it to some extent degrades, not the pupil who receives, but the master who inflicts it. The actual wielding of the rod comes more easy and natural to a lad of seventeen than to a clergyman of seventy, and it might therefore be well to retain the services of the former as the arm of the law, provided its head were upon older shoulders. The head of the state, whether he will or no, must be responsible for all that is done in its name; and he grievously fails in his duty if justice is turned into bullying. It is no use talking about the system of Arnold or of anybody, unless it is worked by a man wise and earnest as Arnold; and, unfortunately, such men are too rare in these days.

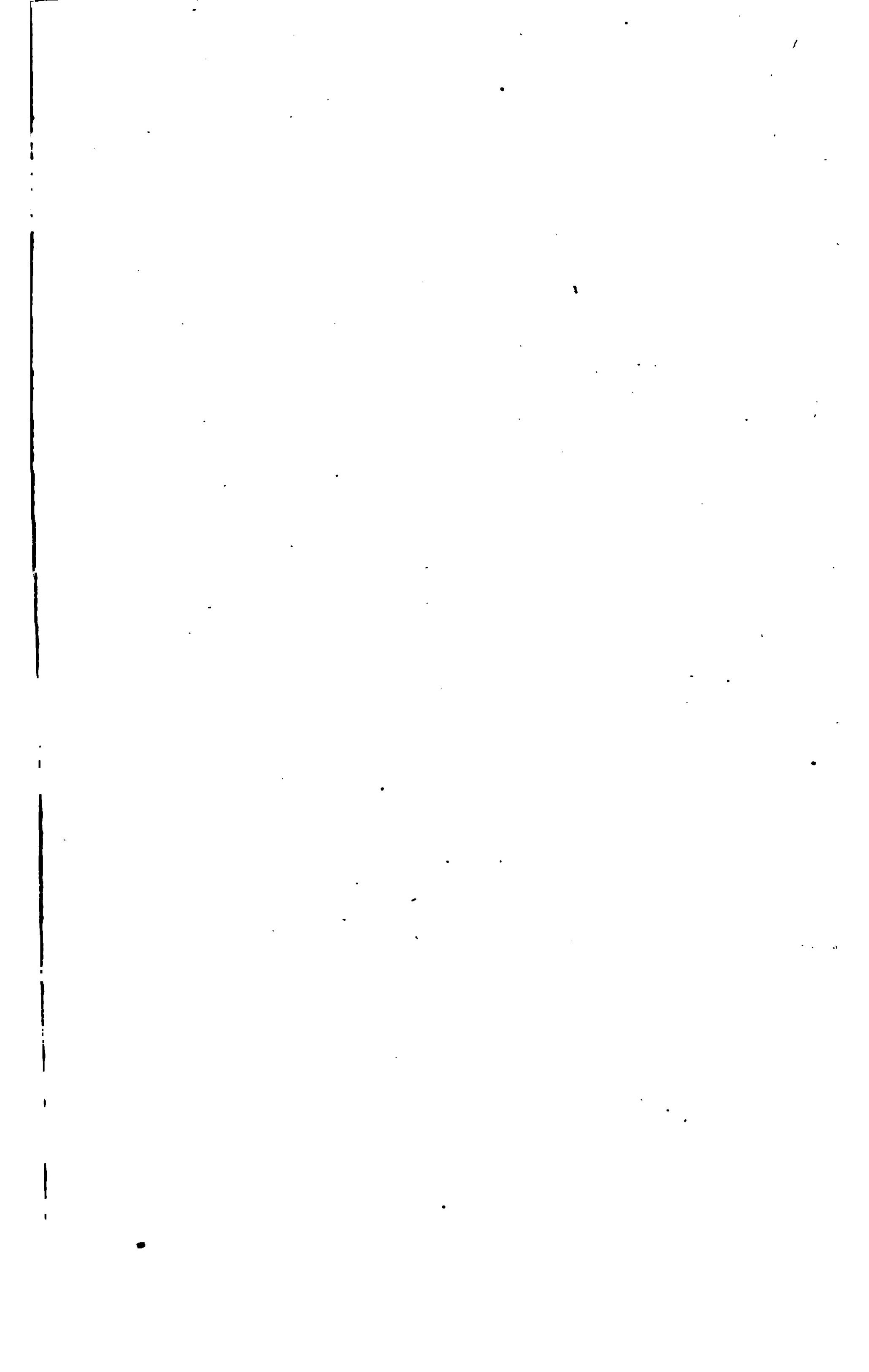
Other objections which have been made to corporal punishment are too slight to merit much attention. It is said to cause brutality in the case of both sufferer and inflicter. Are public schoolboys found more brutal than the louts who grow up without having any of their loutishness licked out of them? Of course, many things in excess will foster brutality—too much beef and brandy to wit: for the birch is only claimed its proper and restricted place in the economy of civilization. Again, excessive severity will no doubt destroy all affection between master and pupil, and stir up in the latter's mind such feelings as seem to have animated some of our juvenile forefathers:

'I wold my master were an hare,
& all his bookis houndis were,
& I myself a Ioly hontere;
To blow my horn I wold not spare.'

But, as the case now stands, would any one who knows what public school-life is, not laugh if he heard it asserted that confidence and affection between rulers and ruled is not more common

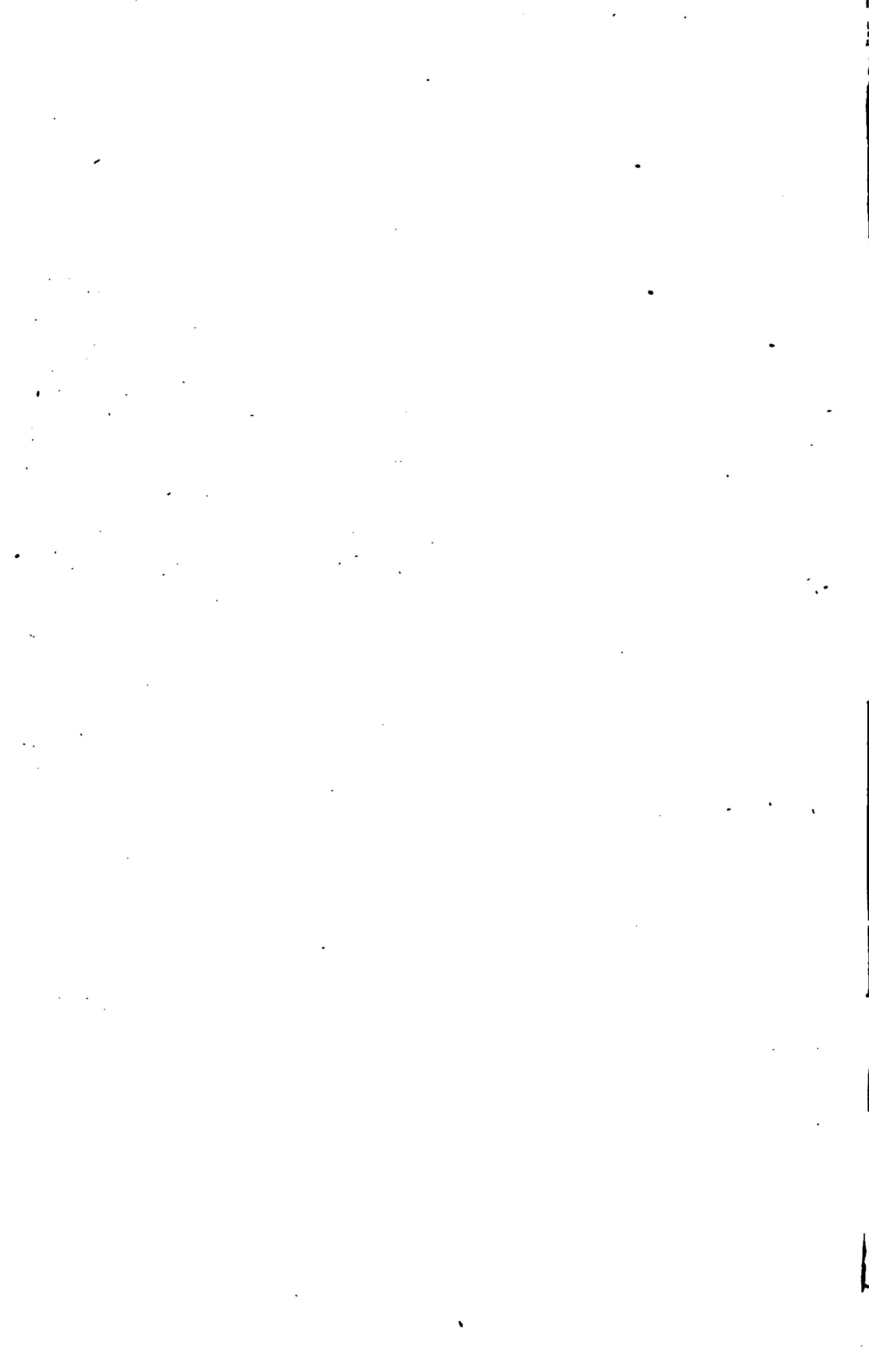
there than at schools where authority is weaker and fussier and more often called in question? Certainly, high spirit and independence do not seem to flourish less vigorously than elsewhere under the baleful shadow of the birch. We have read in Plato that unbridled democracy is nearest to tyranny; many of us have yet to learn that a firm and strong, and, if need be, severe government, is the only security for real freedom.

I set out with the intention of impartially considering this subject, and if I am found holding a brief for brimstone, it is because I believe it to be unduly depreciated at present. But if the scholastic Sangrados get the upper hand again, my pen, for one, shall be turned against them. Brimstone is an useful drug, but, like other drugs, it must be taken in moderation, only upon due occasion, and always in treacle, which condiment ought to be composed of equal proportions of care, sympathy, and common sense. One of the wisest things ever said about education was Joubert's maxim, that it ought to be 'warm and severe; not cold and soft.' It was once made cold and severe; the tendency, nowadays, is to make it warm and soft, and the race of puppies, prigs, and mollycoddles appears to increase upon us with mushroom rapidity. Harsh schoolmasters are enemies of happy boyhood; but they are not such harmful enemies as those easy guardians who are willing to allow conceit, laziness, selfishness, and insolence to grow up unchecked. With the fear of the 'Daily Telegraph' and the gushing school of sentimentalists before my eyes, I repeat that over-indulgence is the chief evil which is to be feared by our boys—God bless them!



[Drawn by Harrison Weir]

F U R.



LEAF BY LEAF, AND TEAR BY TEAR.

(See *Frontispiece.*)

YONDER, where the garden-close
 Edges of the sea-cliff nears,
 In her hand she holds a rose,
 Shedding leaf by leaf like tears.
 White and pink, and pink and white,
 Falling 'gainst the sunlight there ;
 Like her soft cheek's peach bloom bright,
 Haloed with her sunny hair.
 'Neath the rose-walk's gloom she stands,
 Love's sweet pleadings shyly hears,
 Shedding from her trembling hands
 Leaf by leaf, like happy tears.

Yonder, where the barren sea
 Laps against the grey cold shore,
 White, and worn, and old, sits she,
 Weeping, waiting, evermore.
 Winter woods are waning fast,
 Snapt are all her love dreams gay,
 Brave sweet hope has sunk at last,
 Dead and crushed beside the way.
 One late rose within her hands,
 Bends she o'er Hope's quiet bier,
 Dropping, where she lonely stands,
 Leaf by leaf, and tear by tear.

FRED. E. WEATHERBY, B.A.

LAND AND SEA.

FIVE and twenty years ago it may be safely said that the minds of ninety-nine out of every hundred British schoolboys were swayed by an imaginative anti-nomy, the two rival powers of which were Lever and Marryat. The life, the atmosphere, the movement abounding in the novels of the authors of 'Charles O'Malley' and 'Peter Simple,' constituted the opposing poles to which the enthusiasm and the aspirations of every youngster *œstat.* ten to seventeen were irresistibly led with all the attraction of magnetism. Now Marryat was in the ascendant, now Lever: it was simply a question which of the two authors our schoolboy had last read. Now he dreamt of desperate sorties, well-planned ambuscades, reconnaissances, forlorn hopes, night attacks, terrible in their preparation, and splendid in their catastrophe: now of privateers and privateering, victories achieved in the teeth of the combined antagonism of Neptune and Vulcan, wonderful feats performed by urchin admirals in war sloops and *speronaros*, the ennobling discipline of the cock-pit, and the fierce delights of the midshipmen's mess. The secret of the charm in either case it was not difficult to discover. The existence depicted both by Lever and by Marryat was the very embodiment of every idea of liberty, of fun, of rollicking dash, and of prosperous pluck which a youngster could conceive. No base desires, no ignoble appetites were ever excited or encouraged by a single line which either of these writers ever penned. The chord of sympathy which they struck, if now and then somewhat extravagant in its note, had, at least, a ring always

manly, always healthful, invigorating, English, and pure. And it may be regarded as matter for special congratulation by the parents of many an English boy that the writings of Charles Lever and Frederick Marryat synchronized as closely as they did in point of the enthusiastic popularity which was their immediate lot. As regards their influences and effects, the novels of Marryat were a corrective to those of Lever, just as a strong dose of Lever was an antidote to Marryat. The youngster whose head was turned by the pomp and circumstance of glorious war, whose eye was dazzled by the glitter of cuirasses and the gleam of naked swords under the rays of a Spanish sun, no sooner betook himself to the pages of 'Midshipman Easy' or 'The King's Own,' than the hue of his vision was changed, and the field of his ambition altered. It was no longer the bray of trumpets and the clash of steel which thrilled his spirit: no longer the song of 'The Irish Dragoon' to which his heart beat tune, no longer the 'He would be a soldier' which was the refrain of his juvenile existence. The ocean usurped the place of the tented field; instead of the well-mounted troop parading through the town, the wonder of maidens on balconies, and the glory of the multitude in the streets, the image of a line-of-battle-ship rose before his eyes, the decks cleared for action, the Union Jack waving from the mainmast, the ringing cheer of the British tar, the booming of a cross-fire, the boarding of the enemy's vessel, the final victory, due as much as anything to the splendid exertions and the superhuman powers of a small

naval officer, aged fourteen years, who was the centre of the schoolboy dreamer's vision, and who was, in point of fact, none other than himself. The result of these conflicting ambitions, following each other in succession so swift, was generally what might have been expected. The temporary exclusive possession of the boyish mind by Lever and Marryat in turns, terminated in a conviction that, on the whole, it might be as well not to attempt to realise the existence portrayed by either. Psychological authorities inform us that when contending motives exactly balance each other in the human mind, no action results, adducing, as illustrative of this proposition, the time-honoured instance of the homely quadruped standing betwixt two bundles of hay the same in size and in appearance. Something of the same kind was the consequence to the schoolboy world of a course of alternated perusal of Lever and Marryat. Reflection seemed to show that the attractions of a naval and a military career were as nearly as possible equal; and the youthful enthusiast, despairing of the power successfully to decide between these distracting claims, arrived at the conclusion that it might, on the whole, be as well if he devoted his energies for the present to Latin syntax or irregular Greek verbs. If Lever and Marryat have both inspired some proportion of young gentlemen in the fourth forms at Eton and Harrow with a passion that has found vent for itself in pestering their fond fathers to make application on their behalf at the Horse Guards and the Admiralty, the fond fathers in question may ascribe to the simultaneous enthusiasm which the fictions of the novelists of the land and of the sea inflamed that these passions passed off in the majority of instances so quietly.

The recent lamentable death of Charles Lever, and the appearance of such a memoir of Marryat as the existing materials could supply, offer a good opportunity for attempting a parallel between the two men, with respect to their lives and labours, in these pages. And it will be seen that the parallel which we now propose to trace is far from being purely fanciful or imaginary, but is at each point surprisingly close and exact. Each in his own literary sphere reigns supreme: each reflects in his writings, with curious fidelity, the spirit and the tendency of the life he describes. Points of contrast there are between the two men not a few; but it is the contrast, after all, which intensifies and substantiates the analogy. Both Lever and Marryat were not, so to speak, brought up to literature. In their infancy they were not fed upon printer's ink instead of pap; nor were they tucked up, as many writers undoubtedly have been, in proof-sheets. Both had passed through the very best of all public apprenticeships to the novelist's art — the apprenticeship of an active, a varied, a laborious career. Both, like Mr. Anthony Trollope in the present day, had outgrown the heyday of youth when they turned their hands to authorship. Marryat was thirty-seven when, in 1829, he published 'The Naval Officer.' Lever was thirty-three when, ten years later, he delighted the world with 'The Confessions of Harry Lorrequer.' In the course of a literary life of three decades Lever wrote at the rate of a novel a year. In the course of a literary life of less than two decades Marryat contrived to produce not fewer than thirty distinct works. The superabundant activity even of the two men is equally remarkable. As Lever always had other occupations besides those of the

pen to claim his attention and time, so too had Marryat. In the ordinary course of things, they existed for Lever: Marryat created them for himself. Lever was consul at Florence, at Spezzia, at Trieste—not very arduous posts, it is true, but still posts to which official duties and responsibilities attached: Marryat betook himself at Langham to scientific farming, and rising every morning at five to look after his stock with a zeal that would have done credit to one who had no thought in life but the improvement of land and the breeding of cattle. Neither Marryat nor Lever could have succeeded in getting through a tithe of the literary labours which they actually accomplished, unless they had been methodic workers. The method which with Lever was in great degree the outcome of his official experience, may in the case of Marryat be attributed to his naval training. The two men were thus both of them strengthened and prepared for literature by the regular routine of professional existence. At this point we are reminded of an important distinction between the novelist of the land and the novelist of the sea. Marryat reflected his own personal experience; Lever, save in his later novels, did not. Thus every fiction which flowed from the pen of the author of '*The King's Own*' is distinctly in a greater or less degree autobiographical. We will not say that out of Marryat's novels could have been concocted a life of the writer almost as complete as that which his daughter has given us, but there is no incident or episode in Marryat's career of a naval officer narrated in these memoirs which will come with much of novelty to the student of his novels. It is as if the reader of some history had been referred to the original

sources, documents, and authorities whence that history had been derived. So in the Lord Cochrane of the memoir we immediately recognize the Captain M—— of '*The King's Own*', the Captain Savage of '*Peter Simple*', the Captain Maclean of '*Jacob Faithful*'; we see that the ship life in '*Peter Simple*' was that of Marryat himself on board the '*Æolus*', and that the real scene of the mythical '*Midshipman Easy*' was the deck of the '*Impérieuse*'. Again, we now hear that Marryat first visited the Barbadoes in the sloop '*L'Espègle*', and that he burst a blood-vessel in dancing at a ball in that island. Here we immediately recognize the dignity of a ball, and the side-splitting fun which attended it, of '*Peter Simple*'. Once more: before the '*Rosario*' was paid off, Marryat made several cruises with her against smugglers in the Channel; what else has he done than give permanent colour and shape to these experiences in the smuggling passages of '*The King's Own*'? Such instances as these might be multiplied indefinitely in the case of Marryat: there are scarcely any of the kind forthcoming in the case of Lever, with the exception of a few touches of realism which approach to personality; in the earliest and best known of his novels there are none whatever. It may be said that the imagination of the author of '*Charles O'Malley*', '*Harry Lorrequer*', and '*Jack Hinton*' is better than the experience of a score of other writers; and so, no doubt, it is. Only, the fact remains that there cannot attach to the romances of Lever that twofold value—first, as genuine works of novelistic art; secondly, as contributions to the social history of the times and classes with which he was concerned—that there does not attach to the romances of Marryat. For

Lever was the novelist of war, and he himself had 'never set a squadron in the field;' of the army, and his knowledge of military affairs was exclusively that which an acute observer might collect from a regular course of mess dinners, after a preliminary initiation into the mysteries of garrison life; of dashing light-cavalry officers; of their inexhaustibly comic servants; of terrific charges in which he had never taken a part; of the crash and onset of hostile armies which he had himself never beheld. Let it not be supposed that we are for a moment disposed to underrate Lever's work—the joy of our own youth, as we hope it will be also the delight of our posterity. But we are comparing and differentiating the two men, and in such a task we should be guilty of a grievous critical sin if we were to omit what appears to us their prime distinction. As the word-painter of great battles, the impact and the recoil of opposing forces, the fierceness of the war tug, the dispersion of the combatants, the rally, the final triumph of the victors in the game of bloodshed—in the sketching of all these Lever is unequalled. But the splendid pictures which he gives us are struck out at a white-heat of imagination, and with no other aid than that of his own self-evolving consciousness. With Marryat, again, everyfeat of fortitude or skill that his heroes accomplish has had its prototype in his own experiences; and it will be found that the novels of Marryat approach to or recede from the standard of the highest excellence according as they do or do not reflect the vicissitudes of his own nautical career.

One of the consequences of this difference between the two men as novelists is, that inaccuracies and

infidelities to nature and reality, which have no place in the pages of Marryat, are not unfrequent in Lever. Marryat's pictures of the service at the time when Peter Simple and Jack Easy made their first cruise, are those of literal and historical credibility. The contradictions and inconsistencies of Lever's sketches of army life and army discipline thirty years ago have been repeatedly pointed out. Lever, it was true, had, in his own words, 'both a degree and a commission.' But it is much to be questioned whether Lever knew anything of the *vicintime* of T.C.D., which he has depicted in colours so preposterously impossible, if so irresistibly amusing, in 'Charles O'Malley.' A writer in 'Fraser,' on the first appearance of this novel, who, we make bold to say, was none other than Maginn himself, tackles its author with some severity, but with much justice and good-humour, on the evidence which he betrays of his own academic inexperience, or, at least, his partial experience. 'A Trinity College man,' says Maginn, for Maginn it assuredly was, 'would scarcely talk of an officer who does not exist in the university, namely, the *proctor*. He would have known that in T. C. D. the duties of the proctor are discharged by the *dean*, and those of the *bulldogs* by the *porters*. He would, probably, when he was using technical or slang terms peculiar to the college, such as *chum*, meaning fellow lodger, in the same set of chambers, and *jib*, for junior freshman, have said *skip*, and not servant. "In the evening," says Charles O'Malley, "our occupations became still more pressing; there were balls, suppers, whist parties, rows at the theatre, shindies in the street, devilled drum-sticks at Hayes's, select oyster parties at the Carlingford,

in fact, every known method of remaining up all night, and appearing both pale and penitent the following morning." Surely Mr. Lever must have mistaken the college for a caravansary, through whose open gates men can come and go at all hours, unquestioned and uncontrolled.' Then come other criticisms, to the effect that a Trinity man would not speak of being on the sick list at the same time that he was abroad in the *Phœnix*, and that he would not have sneered at 'the meagre fare of the fellows,' who, in fact, live only a trifle too sumptuously. 'Finally,' concludes the *Fraserian*, 'we presume that being a medical student, who perhaps attended the lectures on anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and botany, given by the university professors, but open to all who pay the courses, he picked up some names of persons and things, and some old stories, but that he really knew nothing of college life or of the university he has held up to ridicule.' Maginn himself was a staunch Trinitarian, and some of these strictures must be attributed to a spirit of patriotic partizanship. That Lever drew largely on his fancy for his facts illustrative of existence at the Dublin *academia* is likely enough, as well as that his personal knowledge of it was derived from pretty much those sources which Maginn enumerates; but the fact of Lever's diploma is as indisputable as his connection with the 'Dublin University Magazine.'

Let us cite another example of the poetic licence which Lever allows himself in his descriptive passages. Speaking of the cliffs of Moher, he alludes to 'pebbly beach,' 'minute peals of waves,' 'fishing-smacks,' 'golden straw,' 'fisherman's hut,' 'a road along the margin of the cliff,' 'tall and

ancient lime-trees,' as incidental accessories to the scene. Now, the coast of Clare is, as a matter of fact, without a single one of these pleasing features. For grandeur, desolation, and magnificence it is unsurpassed. It is an unbroken succession of dizzy precipices, rising suddenly out of the waves, or else with the merest fringe in front of them of jagged stones. But, for the most part, there is not a span of earth on which the fowl of the air might rest in his flight towards the New World between the perpendicular rocks of the Moher coast and the fury of the Atlantic tides.

We have spoken of Lever and Marryat as each displaying in their fictions an overflowing measure of what we may call the spirit of the two professions to whose literary service they dedicated themselves. Glitter and pageantry, pomp, show, and circumstance—these are proverbially and professionally dear to the military mind; Lever never loses an opportunity of dwelling on them. Whether it is a review in the *Phœnix*, or a march-past in the streets of some foreign capital; a parade in peace, or the death grip amid the hurly-burly of war; the entry of the French army into Berlin, as described in 'Tom Burke,' or the aspect of Paris during the occupation by the Allied Armies, as in 'Jack Hinton'—this tendency is equally conspicuous. Now, with naval men, on the other hand, everything sinks into insignificance in comparison with plainness, method, efficiency. Thus the descriptions which Marryat gives us of ships drawn up in order of battle, of the meeting of naval celebrities, of battles, and of deeds of daring, dwell as little as possible upon the ornamental accessories and accidents of the scene. There is

a straightforwardness, a simplicity, a severity in all these matters, essentially characteristic of the nautical man and the naval mind. If we are not mistaken, the influence of Marryat's intensely professional spirit may be seen, as contrasted with that of Lever, in other ways than this. His exactitude in setting before us scenes and places, his geographical and topographical precision—these are just what might have been expected in an author who had learned the value and the necessity of a rigid accuracy in the most practical of all schools; to whom, as he ploughed his perilous and watery course, a mistake of an inch might make all the difference between life and death. We are disposed to think that it was the habit of order and regularity acquired in the course of his sailor experiences which made Marryat, later on in life, aim at investing his farm in Norfolk with a model character. In their literary style, the very turn of their sentences and rounding of their periods, the terse brevity of the one and the elaborately sparkling rhetoric of the other, we may see continual traces of the professional distinction. While we are on this subject of the professional notes that characterise respectively the novelist of the land and of the sea, it is impossible not to be struck by the degree in which the two men are representative, in a way more significant than we have yet pointed out, of the spirit and history of their times. If the greatest authors are those who are the most complete exponents of the temper, and whose works are the most perfect reflexes of the events, of their times, then both Lever and Marryat must be allowed to overtop their contemporaries by head and shoulders. Just as Lever was the literary

organ of the military enthusiasm begotten by the success of the British army in the Peninsular war, so the taste which Marryat satisfied, and which, like every elemental force in literature, he also created—the passion for nautical adventure, the thirst for deeds of naval daring—was the natural and historical outcome of the triumphs of Nelson and Collingwood. Milton was not more the poet of Puritanism, Dante of mediæval Catholicism, Shakespeare of the opening drama of the modern age, Byron of its ripeness or consummation, than Marryat and Lever were the novelists of the splendid epoch of English history coincident with the period during which our fortunate isle was the supreme arbitress of the destinies of Europe, both by land and sea. A second Lever or a second Marryat may be, and we believe is, impossible, but only because the circumstances of national history which witnessed their literary development are no longer forthcoming.

Thus have we endeavoured to indicate some of the chief features of similarity and dissimilarity in the style and the treatment of this pair of incomparable writers. We will now enumerate such of their remaining points of literary contact as are necessary to complete and sustain the parallel we have commenced. And first, it is the common prerogative, both of Marryat and Lever, to combine genius and geniality. Their writings—and through their writings the story of their lives—command that affectionate excess of personal interest and sympathy which is only accorded by the public to a very few of those who labour for its literary amusement or instruction.

*Omne vafer vitium ridenti Flaccus
Tentat et admissus circum præordia
ludit amico.*

Both Lever and Marryat have a keen satirical vein running through their writings; yet they can neither of them be called satirists. Theirs is the satire of Horace and of Sterne, not the ruthless invective of Juvenal, or the *scrissima indignatio* of Swift. They shoot folly as it flies, but the echo of each shot is drowned in a peal of ringing laughter and good-humoured merriment. Over and above this innate kindness of heart, equally conspicuous in Lever and Marryat, their novels are stamped by an individuality which serves to make the writer personally known to the reader. Hence the feeling, elicited by each successive work of the authors of '*Harry Lorrequer*' and '*Midshipman Easy*', that it was but a fresh opportunity offered to the public of improving an actual acquaintance which had begun years since; and hence, too, it was that, when Lever died last year, and Marryat died twenty-four years ago, a sentiment of keenly personal loss and sorrow went through the country; such a sentiment as that which followed the death of Thackeray and of Dickens, and which it is one of the truest tests of genius to create. Again, Marryat and Lever possessed the same insight into human character and human motives—the same happy faculty of investing typical personages with a variety of development and a diversity of colour. Neither Marryat nor Lever repeat themselves. Inferior artists are only able to shadow forth the same type in one individual; Lever and Marryat have a legion of characters for one and the same type. A comparison between the *dramatis personæ* of '*Peter Simple*' and '*Midshipman Easy*' will illustrate the justice of this view in the case of Marryat; while we have but to place in

mental juxtaposition the actors in '*Harry Lorrequer*' and '*Jack Hinton*' to verify it as regards Lever. As the two men are alike in their highest excellences, so are they in their defects. Neither can produce a real or effective sketch of natural scenery unless there is a human presence in the foreground. Both are wanting in pathetic powers, and both fail artistically when they attempt the portrayal of feminine character. The women of Lever and Marryat remind one of what may be witnessed on the stage of half a dozen London theatres. Just as most companies possess an actress whose special mission it is to play one particular part, and who seldom ventures beyond the limits of the familiar *rôle*, and just as the *habitué* knows perfectly well beforehand that the delineation of character, though the name be altered, will be on each successive occasion identical, so the reader of Marryat and Lever, immediately he understands the place which a heroine is destined to fill in the action and development of the story, is able to identify her with some one or other of the few feminine varieties he has previously encountered.

It is more easy to trace the literary pedigree of the naval than of the Irish military novelist. Banim and Carleton may, perhaps, be mentioned as Lever's literary progenitors; but there is a wide interval of difference between them, and, like the younger Teucer, the son may boast that he is better than his sire. Lever inaugurated a style and a school. He has had a score of imitators, but he is really without predecessors in his peculiar line. Marryat, on the other hand, may be said to be the lineal descendant of Smollett. But we must not lose sight of the fact that, though

the author of 'Frank Mildmay' has his prototype in the ranks of English writers, his works of fiction were, at the time when they appeared, protests against the spirit that reigned supreme in the fiction of the day—a spirit of forced sentimentalism, vicious, enervating, in a word, essentially namby-pamby. Dickens and Thackeray were as yet unknown, and the public welcomed the honest, outspoken manliness of Marryat with a sense of superlative relief, immediately recognizing, in his quiet effectiveness of circumstantial narrative, no unworthy successor of Defoe. As a painter of nautical life, Marryat may be safely pronounced superior to Smollett, who himself drew from nature and life. But Smollett entered the navy at twenty and left it at twenty-five. Marryat was in active service from the year 1806 to 1830. It is customary to compare Fennimore Cooper with Marryat. Both, it is true, treated of naval subjects, but from very different points of view; for Cooper is nothing if not romantic. Captain Glasscock, the author of 'Sailors and Saints,' 'Land Sharks and Sea Gulls,' imbibed a considerable measure of Marryat's spirit; and Mr. Howard, author of 'Rattlin the Reefer,' Captain Chamier, author of 'Ben Brace,' Michael Scott, author of 'Tom Cringle's Log,' have attempted, not unsuccessfully, to catch his manner and reproduce his charm. Mr. James Hannay deserves a place, and a high one, among our naval novelists; but Mr. Hannay is too fastidious in his elaboration of epigrams, and his balancing of sentences, ever successfully to acquire the strength and the swiftness of movement which constitutes the real excellence of the novel of the sea.

To pass from the works of

Marryat and Lever to their lives, it is to be hoped that, at no distant date, we may have a biography of Lever which will give us as real a picture of the man as the volumes lately published by his daughter do of Marryat. Meanwhile, we will content ourselves with constructing such a picture of Captain Marryat's every-day life as the materials which Mrs. Ross Church has brought together render no difficult task. For that portion of his existence which was coincident with his naval career, the reader may, as has been already said, be referred to Marryat's own novels. But of his social experiences, both in London and at Langham—the estate which he purchased—no record whatever is to be found in his own works. It was in 1830 that 'private affairs'—to wit, his marriage with Miss Shairp—induced Captain Marryat to resign the command of his ship, the 'Ariadne,' and to leave the navy. He had been appointed equerry to the late Duke of Sussex, and he was compelled to remain near the person of the King's brother. His first residence was Sussex House, Hammersmith, which he had purchased of the Duke, and where, in the words of one who knew him well, 'he kept up a round of incessant gaiety and a course of almost splendid extravagance.' 'At Sussex House,' continues the writer,* 'were held those amusing conjuring *soirées* which Captain Marryat used to have, in conjunction with his great friend, Captain Chamier, where they would display the various tricks of sleight-of-hand which they together had purchased and learned of the wizard of that day, and where Theodore Hook was wont to bewilder the company with his ventriloquisms, and make them laugh with his funny

* 'Cornhill Magazine,' Vol. xvi. p. 149.

stories and imitations. There half the men to be met were men such as the world had talked of, and whose *bon-mots* were worth remembering. Marryat lived then in the atmosphere of a Court as well as in the odour of literature. The former air might easily be dispensed with without any loss of happiness, but one would have thought that intellectual society had become necessary for his existence. I remember him on the Continent some years later than this, at all sorts of places, at Brussels, at Antwerp, at Paris, at Spa, always living *en prince*, and always the same, wherever he went, throwing away his money with both hands—the merriest, wittiest, most good-natured fellow in the world. As soon as he was famous society was ready to applaud. Once at a German *table-d'hôte*, where I also was present (for I speak from personal recollection), he, in order to amuse his next neighbour, suddenly laid down his knife and fork, and looked to the other end of the table. The other knives and forks went down. He laughed, and there was a dead silence. "I'll trouble you for the salt," said he, or something equally commonplace, whereupon there was a general roar of laughter. "There's nothing like being considered a wit," he whispered. Later, I remember Captain Marryat living in Spanish Place, London. His establishment was not so superb as it had been at Sussex House; but his manner of living was as gay. It was an incessant round of dining out and giving dinners. At his table you met all the celebrities of the day. His intimate friends were men and women who had made their names of value. In Spanish Place it was I had seen him in association with Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, Ainsworth,

and John Poole, or with the beautiful Lady Blessington and D'Orsay; and then, after an absence of years, I travelled into Norfolk, to find him in a most out-of-the-way place.' *Apropos* of his retirement to Langham, Captain Marryat, in his unpublished fragment, 'Life of Lord Napier,' thus writes himself: 'Most sailors, when they retire from the service, turn to agriculture, and, generally speaking, make very good farmers. There appears something very natural in this. When Adam was created a man in full vigour, he naturally took to the labours of the field. And what is a sailor—who, although he has run all over the world, has, in fact, never lived on it—when you plant him on shore, but a sort of Adam—a new creature starting into existence, as it were, in his prime? For all his former life has been, as far as terrestrial affairs are concerned, but a deep sleep.' Into his new life as country gentleman and country farmer, Captain Marryat entered with as much of enthusiasm and of energy as his character might have led one to expect. The truth is, action was necessary to such a man, and the merely sedentary activity of *littérateur* was not enough to provide his exuberant powers with the work which they demanded. His farming was not financially a success, but it gave him an occupation in which he rejoiced, and from which his friends found it no easy matter to tempt him, even on a flying visit to London. Langham Manor was a cottage in the Elizabethan style, built after the model of one at Virginia Water belonging to George IV., with latticed windows opening on to flights of stone steps, ornamented with vases of flowers, and leading down from the long, narrow dining-room, 'where (surrounded

by Clarkson Stanfield's illustrations of "Poor Jack," with which the walls were clothed) Captain Marryat composed his later works in the room behind. . . . When he wrote in the dining-room, he always selected a corner of the table that commanded a view of the lawn on which his favourite bull, "Ben Brace," was generally tethered.' The name of Captain Marryat, as a generous landlord and a kind friend to the labouring poor about his property, is still cherished in Norfolk. 'Dumpling,' Marryat's pony, was a character in himself; mounted on him 'the Captain' would 'ride about his farm in all weathers, attired in a velveteen shooting-coat, mud-be-spattered highlows, and a "shocking bad hat." ' The writer in the 'Cornhill' tells a pleasant story about this historical steed, Dumpling, who had 'a spiteful temper,' which, it appears, he never omitted any opportunity of showing. 'Marryat once put two of his children upon the pony, when he himself was occupied about some farming operations, and sent them across the meadow. So long as he was in sight, Dumpling trotted steadily along, but no sooner did he find himself unobserved, than up flew his heels, and both the little girls went over his head. Back they came running to their father, to complain of "Dumpy." "Come here, sir," shouted Marryat to the conscience-stricken pony. Dumpling saw a whip in his master's hand; he glanced first one side and then the other, while Marryat waited for him to come. He might have turned tail and raced all over the meadow; but, after a moment's reflection, he hung his head penitently, and, running to his master, thrust his head under Marryat's arm. The moral of it of course was, that Dumpling did not get a whipping.' Though Captain

Marryat had bought Langham in 1839, he had scarcely settled regularly down till 1843. But when once settled, he was not to be moved. Now there is a dinner given to Charles Dickens, and a special invitation is despatched to Langham; now some theatricals, with an unusually promising cast, are on the *tapis*, and Mr. Forster writes as follows: 'Look at the bill enclosed; it is all Dickens' doing. I am a lamb at the slaughter. But *will you come up?* Stanny (Stanfield) and all of us are in it. Dickens plays "Babadil." I have kept my best place for you. If you will come, tell me, and you shall have the card of invitation by return of post. Many are coming from greater distances than Langham. *Do come.* I shall be so pleased to hear "off, off," and "fling him over" (for hear them I suppose I must), from your friendly voice. Now be a gentleman—a trump—a first-rater—and come special for the play. Tickets are at a premium, I can tell you.' This urgent appeal is only one out of many which Marryat received at Langham, and which he, without exception, steadfastly resisted. He writes, even to an intimate friend, to say that 'he has a horror of publicity, and that the very idea of taking the chair at a meeting is enough to keep him away.' In August, 1847, the ailments from which Marryat had long suffered became alarming, and in that month he writes to his sister, that he had twice broken a blood-vessel, and had lost two stone in weight. 'On the early morning of the month of August, 1848, just about dawn, he was lying apparently asleep, when his housekeeper, who had nursed him most faithfully throughout his long illness, and was watching beside him at the moment, heard him murmur

a sentence of the Lord's Prayer; as he finished it, he gave a short sigh, a shiver passed through his frame, and he was gone.'

The novels which Captain Marryat produced during the later years of his life, in the midst of his retirement at Langham, have not met the intense popularity which his earlier works have permanently secured for themselves. 'M. Violet,' 'Valerie,' 'Olla Podrida'—the latter quite the prettiest of his short stories—will live, but not with the same continued freshness and exuberance of vitality as 'Peter Simple,' 'Midshipman Easy,' and 'Jacob Faithful.' As much may probably be said for the fictions which were the results of the closing years of the literary labours of Lever. But it was the good fortune of the author of 'Harry Lorrequer' and 'Charles O'Malley' to achieve excellence of a very high character in a line totally distinct from anything he had previously essayed in some of his penultimate productions. 'Sir Brooke Fossbrooke' and 'That Boy of Norcott's' are equal to anything which Lever ever wrote; considered as a work of novelistic art, the former of these may, indeed, be pronounced superior to anything he had previously accomplished. The character of Dudley Sewell and his wife, of the old Irish judge, the grouping and the subordination of the minor *dramatis personæ* were specimens of literary workmanship such as Lever had not given us before. Close upon a quarter of a century has passed since Marryat died; more than a quarter of a century passed since the first of Lever's novels appeared, and the books of each writer continue to hold their own; more than this, those who read these books first as boys, can turn to them again, now that they are men of middle age, with all the

zest and pleasure that attended their first perusal. This one simple fact is the highest test of truth to nature and fidelity to life to which a writer of fiction can be submitted. In his 'Diary in America,' Marryat tells the following charming story:—'I made this morning a purchase at a store, which an intelligent little boy brought home for me. As he walked by my side, he amused me very much by putting the following questions: "Pray, Captain, has Mr. Easy left the King of England's service?" "I think he has," replied I; "if you recollect, he married and went on shore." "Have you seen Mr. Japhet lately?" was the next query. "Not very lately," replied I; "the last time I saw him was at the publisher's." The little fellow went away perfectly satisfied that they were both alive and well.' Such a power as these questions of the small American implies, is a heavy responsibility for the author who possesses it; and no author could have exercised it with an effect more uniformly beneficent than Marryat, and, it may be added, Lever. The tone and temper of Marryat's novels are those with which English parents would like to see their sons imbued—the lessons embedded in the midst of all their pleasantry are those which every lad must learn by heart, who would steer a straight course through life—lessons of constancy to purpose, loyalty to duty, loyalty to friends. And the same thing is true of Lever. Is the devil to have all the good tunes to himself? Is virtue to be perpetually condemned to wear the mien of dulness? Marryat and Lever are, above all things, national writers, and of two national writers such a boast as this is a mighty one to be able to make.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

LADY DUGDALE'S DIAMONDS.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

'SHE was not My Lady then.' Thus Mr. Thomas Walters, the rotund, rubicund, good-tempered landlord of that well-known village inn, 'The Dugdale Arms,' which hangs forth its sign, resplendent with all the colours of the rainbow and a dazzling amount of gold emblazoning, across the green, friend or stranger must pass by, if he wish to reach Oakhill, Lord Dugdale's ancestral seat.

She was not My Lady then, although we often called her my lady, for she had married in order to get as near having a right to be so addressed as an Honourable could bring her; and I name my story 'Lady Dugdale's Diamonds' for that reason.

There were plenty of heirs between her husband and the title when we took up housekeeping at Johnesborough, but they are all dead and gone.

Mr. Will, my old master, is now Earl of Dugdale. I have known him hard up for a guinea, and this day he can hold his own with the wealthiest in the land.

He is just the same as ever, though—just the same careless, kindly gentleman we all loved so dearly.

There is much talk in these days about servants caring for nothing and no one, save their own interests and their own selves. For my part, I say there always were and there always will be some masters and some mistresses no servant could like.

I never served any one, except Mr. Will, and I can honestly say I would have gone through fire and water for him.

The Honourable William Pattenham—that was his name and

title. My father chanced to be one of the tenants on the Oakhill estate, where Mr. Will, an orphan, was brought up by his uncle, the seventh Earl; and many a morning we two little lads whipped the trout stream, or surprised Puss at an early toilette, or startled the partridges amongst the stubble.

Ah! that was a rare life! I would not get up now at two o'clock in the morning to land the finest trout that ever swam—but, look you, I would give all I am ever like to be worth in this world to wish to cross the dewy meadows at the first streak of day, and feel my heart bound with an indescribable joy at sight of the fields whence the grain had been carried, brightening as the sun rose and climbed higher and higher.

Well, it only comes to this—I was young and I am old, and other lads whip the trout streams and flush the partridges and astonish Madame Hare; for the world is going and coming, and I am going—and some one else is coming fast after me, and there is somebody behind him, and somebody else following that one in turn.

Ay, it is a queer road we travel from boyhood on, and ever on, as fast as ever our feet will carry us, till we reach a point when we want to turn back for good, and never be anything again but boys for evermore.

You will wonder at a fat old fellow like me—nothing but a village innkeeper—having such notions as these; but if you had known Mr. Will when he was a young man, you would not be surprised at my having learned what

has since passed many a lonely hour of my life.

He was the most devil-me-care young gentleman I ever did see—always in debt, always falling in love—quite as often falling out of it—in one way the most reckless, restless, extravagant master a man could have had, and yet in another, thoughtful, and occasionally even sad.

'Why did my uncle bring me up to all this, Tom?' he would say sometimes, pointing to the useless and expensive articles he gathered about him. 'Why did he not put me to some honest calling? If he had not a living to spare, why could not he have made a lawyer of me? I think, Tom, I might have been Chief Justice myself, issuing urgent invitations to various poor wretches to appear before his most gracious Majesty, instead of having to decline his most gracious Majesty's pressing invitations as best I can. It is enough to drive a fellow mad. I have the tastes, habits, extravagances of ten thousand a year, and I never had but a bare five hundred pounds per annum, which went to the Jews (would the race had never been permitted to leave Babylon) half a century ago, or thereabouts.'

That was his style, and a man, no matter how stupid he might be, could not help brightening up a little under such an employer.

We are very much like horses; a slow one always tries to keep pace with a fast goer—I did. For instance, I did not understand what Mr. Will meant by an invitation to appear before George the Fourth, till I had read the next writ which my master flung down on his dressing-table with an oath, when that little black-guard, Simeon—a true descendant of him who, with his brother Levi, is stigmatized in Holy

Writ, as 'having instruments of cruelty in their habitations'—touched him on the shoulder, and asked him, rather pressingly, to spend the evening at Mr. Absalom's in Cursitor Street.

The wretch had contrived to reach even the innermost sanctuary by representing himself as a hair-dresser and his man as an assistant.

'Good-bye, Tom,' said Mr. Will, after I had taken off his dress-coat and helped him on with another, holding out his hand just as if he had been my equal—and by that I knew he felt it dreadfully—'Good-bye, and keep up your spirits. I will disappoint these cursed Jews one of these days, if it be even at the expense of an ounce of lead.'

And then, with a mocking bow, he turned to Simeon and said, 'It is not to your tribe I am alluding, my dear fellow. I fancy it has not been all milk and honey with your branch of the family, and that the rough part of the labour fell to your share, even at the Tower of Babel. Possibly you did the hod-work there, which would have made even an Irishman dizzy.'

And so he went—a gentleman, every inch of him—for the last time to Cursitor Street.

You may guess how I felt after he was gone. Every time these fellows had him in their clutches, it seemed harder and harder for him to get out of them again.

All he owned had gone long and long before. His relatives would neither give nor lend him a shilling. His friends were getting tired, and I could not wonder at it. One gentleman may be willing enough to help another at a pinch, but it is not in Christian nature to like spending good money to fill a Jew's coffers.

I sat down in the dressing-room

he had just left, with his clothes littered about as he had thrown them off, and wondered where we could turn for help—wondered till I grew tired with casting about in my mind whether there was one left who would see him out of this trouble, and if so, where that one ought to be looked for.

And then, supposing somebody could be found now, who would help him on the next occasion?

Things had been getting worse and worse with us for a long time.

My head was young then, but it grew giddy reckoning up, or rather trying to reckon up, what he owed, and how the tangle was ever to be unravelled, when who should walk in but a lawyer who had seen Mr. Will through with a few bad scrapes.

Though on the last occasion he had vowed he would never advance another sixpence, still my heart leaped into my mouth for joy at sight of him.

'Your master is gone to Berkeley Square, Walters, I suppose,' he began. 'I saw the Countess was entertaining, as I passed, but I thought I would take my chance of finding him dressing, and late, as usual. Will you tell him he had better keep out of the way for a little while? Marston is going to arrest, and two or three more will follow suit. Thought he would like to know. What an extravagant sinner it is!' he added, looking at the array of articles on the toilette-table; and he would have gone with that, but I shut the door, and implored him to listen to me.

My head, as I have said, was dizzy with thinking, and planning, and scheming, and I was thankful to find any one to speak to about our trouble.

Mr. Will's debts had that night, so to speak, marshalled themselves before my eyes, and I faced them

as he would not have done, and talked of them as he could not.

Perhaps I was wrong to talk so freely of things that I only knew in confidence; but I could not help it. I loved Mr. Will with all my heart, and those Jews, with their evil faces, and heavy gold chains sprawling over their gaudy waist-coats, and huge rings on their dirty fingers, had filled me with a disgust and hatred that I could not have expressed in words.

Although he happened to be a lawyer, Mr. Perrin was a gentleman. As a rule, I do not think much of lawyers and such like; but they say every rule has its exception, and Mr. Perrin was an exception to mine.

I think he must have been fond of Mr. Will, too. Lawyers, even the worst of them, I have noticed, entertain a sort of sneaking fondness for wild characters, for reckless, improvident chaps, such as Mr. Will used to be. It is the redeeming point about them. There may be a providence about it, too, as there is about a mother being fondest of her lame, or blind, or imbecile child. Anyhow, it was not for the money he got out of Mr. Will, his lawyer looked after his affairs then. He is making a good thing of the Earl of Dugdale's estates now; but, Lord! which of us then ever dreamed he would some day reign at Oak-hill?

I, for one, never could have served him as I did, with a perfectly single heart, had such a change seemed probable, or even possible.

I stuck to him as one might to a cheery comrade in a bitter fight, or a shipwrecked companion to a — but there, why do I go on talking such nonsense?

He was a poor master and I a poor servant, and he made me his friend, and I loved him, for all he

was the Honourable William Patingham and I Tom Walters; and I think, for the same reason that I was fond of Mr. Will, Mr. Perrin liked him too.

With a very grave face he listened to what I had to say, and then he remarked—

'I had no idea things were so bad as all this comes to, Walters.'

Then I made answer—

'Sir, they are worse; and you would think so too, if only in a minute, so to speak, I was able to remember all about everything.'

'You have remembered enough,' he said, and sat for a minute quiet. Then he got up to go, but stopped to observe—

'I wish your master would follow my advice.'

'He would follow anything, sir, that meant ease of mind and a berth in the Colonies,' I was bold enough to reply.

'Following my advice would mean ease of mind and a comfortable life in England.'

'Ah! sir, I don't think his pride would let him do that,' I answered, for I thought Mr. Perrin wanted my master to pass through the Court, and I knew it would go sorely against the grain to have such a proposal even made to him.

It was not the fashion then, as it is now, for noblemen to shuffle off their debts in that way like any butcher or greengrocer; and it may be that the very idea of its being supposed Mr. Will could so demean himself made me speak quick and sharp; but Mr. Perrin only laughed, and said—

'His pride did not stand in the way of his getting into debt, and ought not to stand in the way of his getting out of it; it is not so much his pride though as his prejudices.' I looked in a dictionary, after he went away, to learn what he meant by the last

word, but the dictionary explanation did not help me.

Next day he came back again; 'Marston has been paid,' he said. and your master has left Cursitor Street; but I have advised him not to come back here until an arrangement can be effected with the tribes of Israel; so if you put up some of his clothes I will take them with me.'

'Can't I go to him, sir?' I asked.

'No, you had better stay where you are, and answer questions. All you know about Mr. Patingham is, that he was arrested last night, and you have not heard from him since. You need not mention my name in connection with his affairs.'

'No, sir. Please give my duty to Mr. Will, and I hope he won't be long away.'

'If he follows my advice he will never come back here,' said Mr. Perrin.

But Mr. Will did come back. Months after that night when Simeon arrested him, he walked into his rooms as if he had only left them an hour before.

'Yes, Tom, I am free,' he said, in answer to my awkward expression of delight at seeing him once more, 'and yet I have lost my liberty—there's a paradox!—at least I shall lose it at half-past eleven to-morrow morning.'

Still I was so stupid, I did not see his meaning.

'Oh! sir,' I exclaimed, 'I was in hopes all that was over.'

'All what was over?' he repeated; then burst out laughing—'Oh! the Simeon and Levi business. So it is, Tom. No more arrests, unless I am a greater idiot than I take myself to be—no more royal invitations, unless they are dated from Windsor Castle—no more credit—everything is to be cash on delivery for the future with

Will Pattingham—ironically styled The Honourable.'

'Have you had money left you, sir?' I asked; 'or,' I added, a light breaking in upon me, 'is it—'

'Yes,' said Mr. Will, 'it is—' My heart leaped up into my mouth, and then fell back again like a leaden weight. I tried to wish him joy—I tried to look cheerful and pleasant, but it would not do. He saw the news had shocked me, and so he went on—

'All men must die, you know, and I suppose most men must marry; at any rate, I must; and therefore it behoves me to make the best of a—good bargain;' he finished after a pause so slight, that many a one might not have noticed it. 'The lady is wealthy, generous, and kind; my people are delighted with the match; they make no objection on the score of family—why, indeed, should they? Her grandfather on the one side bore a name better known throughout England than that of Pattingham—Smith. Her grandfather on the other side came of an almost equally old race—he was a Jones. Her father thought the two names too good to be divorced, and so dubbed himself "Smyjthe-Johnes;" after which he died, and bequeathed his cognomen and fortune to his only daughter Amelia Selina Annabella, whom I am to marry to-morrow.'

'Are—are you going to take me with you, sir, on the wedding trip?' I asked, wondering whether the old life was indeed all past—whether with his marriage a life so utterly new was to begin, that it should mean for him no Tom—for me no Mr. Will.

'I am afraid not,' he said, with one of his old queer smiles. 'You like a pretty face, Tom, and it would not suit for you to be flirting with my wife's maid. The future Mrs. Pattingham has strict

ideas, and might not approve of any indiscretion. There—I declare the fellow has tears in his eyes. Tom, do you think my marriage is going to part us? Did you think me such a cold-blooded monster as to contemplate flinging over an old friend—for you are my friend? I have been considering into what good berth I can slip you in the new establishment, and have decided that you shall be butler. You must, therefore, go down to Johnesborough, and have everything ready for our return. We are not to reside much in London. I mean to become a model country gentleman. I shall interfere with the poor people, and see that the children learn their catechism.

'Do you know, my grandmother is so charmed with my prospects that she has sent me her diamonds to present to the bride. They came to her, not through the Pattinghams, but some of her own more august progenitors. They would have been a catch for the Jews, in the good old times—eh, Tom?'

I answered him with what spirit and heart I could muster. The old times had often been bad enough; but it seemed to me the new times were promising to be worse still.

We were entering upon evil days, I thought to myself—days when the hours would pass regularly, with all life and hope and enjoyment taken out of them. This was what had come of following Mr. Perrin's advice. In my soul I cursed him, for which, if that gentleman were here now, I would humbly beg his pardon.

'You will let me know where you are going to be married, sir?' I said, after awhile. 'I should like—'

'To be present when the bolt is drawn,' he interrupted. 'Well,

I don't know that there need be any difficulty about the matter. The sacrifice is to take place at St. George's, of course; and—yes, you may come—only, Tom, my lad, if you feel surprised at anything in the ceremony, try not to look so, there's a good fellow, and keep a still tongue afterwards; and with that he held out his hand, and I—well, you can think what you please about it; but we had been boys together, and I loved him, and he seemed going away from me for ever. So I kissed it, and then broke out crying like a woman—or a fool.

'Cheer up, Tom,' he exclaimed; 'when we come back you will know Mrs. Pattingham for the true, honest, amiable creature she is. She has been liberality itself to me, and I only hope I may be able to make her as good a husband as she deserves. I mean to try. Heaven knows I do,' he added, and then he went off humming an opera air; and I thought I had seen the last of light-hearted, easy-going Mr. Will.'

The next morning I thought so more than ever. As the bride came down the aisle, leaning on her husband's arm, I caught a glimpse of her face for the first time. I knew then the part of the ceremony he imagined would surprise me, and I turned my face towards the wall that no one might see the amazement I knew was written on it.

She looked old enough to be his mother. She was ugly enough to have been burnt for a witch in the days when witches were burnt. She had no figure—she was no shape—she had no presence; and her tall, handsome, winning, gracious, well-born husband had sold himself for life to this woman to get out of the hands of those Jews. Though I was in a church, I prefixed a word to Jews that I

won't repeat here; and meeting Simeon in Piccadilly, on my way home, I had much ado to keep from knocking him down.

I wish I had now. The will to do it and the opportunity never dovetailed so neatly together afterwards.

But it is the story of the diamonds I was to tell, you remind me. Patience, I am coming to that. You have now the main threads of it in your hand. I served the Honourable William Pattingham, who, marrying Miss Smyjthe-Johnes, promoted me to be butler at Johnesborough.

To Mrs. Pattingham, Lady Dugdale—the Dowager, I mean—presented her wonderful diamonds, which Mr. Will sent to Rundell and Bridge to be reset. His wife wanted to wear them on the occasion of her presentation at Court. Thus the diamonds were at the jewellers, I at Johnesborough, and Mr. Will and his wife on their wedding-tour.

It was very kind of Mr. Will, giving me the butler's place at Johnesborough; but I could not help wishing he had arranged that I should learn my duties before going there.

When a stern and stately housekeeper, who had been at Johnesborough in the time of Smyjthe-Johnes, addressed me, I wished my shoes were big enough to hide in. However, I took heart of grace, after awhile, and gave her my confidence—told her how I had been Mr. Will's own man—how of his goodness he had chosen me to fill the post of butler; how I knew little or nothing of what a butler was expected to do; and, to wind up all, how thankful I should be if she would give me a few hints.

Over her spectacles the old lady looked at me for a minute. Then

she said, ' Young man, you will do; you are modest and ingenuous.' (Somehow, it seemed to me I was then always running up against people who used long words.) ' I will instruct you myself. Few persons, male or female, know more of the nature of a butler's duties than I.'

Which was quite true. Mrs. Barrett deserved all the praise she was good enough to bestow on herself.

By the time Mr. Will returned, I had learned enough not to disgrace his recommendation. Indeed, my Lady herself seemed surprised at my progress, for she said to me one day, ' I had no notion, Walter, you had so correct an idea of the duties of your position. Even my dear father could have found no fault with the manner in which you discharge them.'

This was high praise from her Ladyship. The doings of Johnes of Johnesborough seemed, in those days, right in the sight of his daughter—as right as her own doings do now.

No one ever can tell how a marriage will turn out. I am sure, had any person told me, that day in St. George's Church, I should some time consider my master had done a good thing for himself in taking Miss Johnes for better for worse, I must have laughed out in very scorn and bitterness; but the pair had not been long back at Johnesborough before I began to believe she was the very wife for Mr. Will.

If she was fussy and fidgety—and who could doubt her being both?—Mr. Will was too much the other way. She kept things together; she prevented his getting into debt again; she led him into paths of respectability so fenced in by ideas, and traditions, and responsibilities, and proprieties,

that I think it would have been next to impossible for any man to break bounds, even had he wished to do so. But Mr. Will did not wish. For the first time, he had a chance given him of doing well; and he was not above taking advantage of it. I know he felt his wife had given him all she had it in her power to bestow, and that it behoved him to try to make her some return. When he married her there was not a morsel of love on his side; but it grew. Day by day, month by month, year by year, it went on putting out buds and shoots; and now I doubt if there is a man in the county fonder of his wife and the mother of his children than William, Earl of Dugdale. And as for the Countess, I think she gets younger every week, and she is not half so plain as she was when she relieved Mr. Will of his debts, and took it in hand to make a steady, respectable, and respected country gentleman of him.

But I am running ahead too fast. When she came home to Johnesborough I did not much care for her, and I liked her ways still less; fussing here, and fuming there; worrying herself about the merest trifles, and nothing to be put out of the regular course, even for a moment.

If she had got hold of any gentleman less easy-natured and sweet-tempered than Mr. Will, she would have driven him, or he would have driven her, mad in three months. Even Mrs. Barrett confessed that in some things Mrs. Pattingham was difficult to please.

I tried to please her for Mr. Will's sake, and was making way in her good graces, when one day there came a letter from some place very far away, where old Lady Pattingham, the Dowager, generally spent three parts of the year, saying she was dangerously

ill, and summoning Mr. Will and my Lady to her side.

Mr. Will was her favourite of the whole family. She had done a great deal for him, to my knowledge—paid debts for him often, and given him money, together with a large quantity of good advice, and then, finding that nothing did him any permanent good, she tired, like the best of his friends, and returned the letters he sent her unopened.

Still her heart was with him, everybody knew; and her conduct in the matter of the diamonds proved that she was more than ready to forgive, when once she saw a hope of reformation.

I do not think it occurred to Mr. Will that she had any thought of making him her heir; not so, however, with my Lady. She was not mercenary exactly, and yet she was sufficiently worldly-wise to know it would be folly to throw away the chance of a legacy, and accordingly she would hear of no delay on this occasion, but was even more anxious than Mr. Will to start at once.

Anyhow, to make a long story short, they left Johnesborough the same day the news arrived. In a letter Mr. Will wrote to me from London he said neither his uncle nor the Countess was in London, that he would not wait for the Earl's company, but travel on without delay. The period of his return must be uncertain; but he would send instructions home from time to time.

Thus, once again we were all quiet at Johnesborough; and mighty dull I found it, after London.

True, one day we were all flung into a state of excitement by a visit from the Earl. Posting up from the North, where he had been staying, he took Johnesborough in his way, and put the footman,

who answered the door, into a state of bewilderment by asking to see me.

'Is Thomas Walters here?' inquired his Lordship; 'send him to me directly;' and, without waiting to be asked, he walked into the library, the door of which chanced to be open.

I found the Earl in one of his tempers.

What was the meaning of Mr. Will being sent for, and he not? Was not the dying lady his mother, and who could be nearer to her than he? What had Mr. Will said? Did I know who sent the letter? Had I heard anything of its contents? Though I was but a servant still, I had known the Earl all my life, and he spoke to me just as freely and as angrily as Mr. Will might have done, if anything had chanced to put him in a passion.

Careless about his papers as about all his other concerns, my master had tossed the doctor's letter on his table, and left it there; and as I knew he had no secrets from anybody, I gave it to the Earl to read. It was written in some foreign language, and his Lordship had trouble to make it out; but he managed to do so at last, and then, throwing it down, broke forth again—What was the meaning of their not sending to him?

'The letter may have gone astray, my Lord,' I ventured to suggest, and my words fell like oil on troubled waters.

It might—it had; here was the solution of the enigma. Of course his mother would send for him. Thus the Earl ran on, ending by saying I was an honest fellow and attached to the family.

The mercury of his temper fell as rapidly as it had risen. His voice resumed its usual tone; his brow cleared; he threw himself

into an easy chair, and allowed me to get him some refreshment. He praised the vintages loved by the departed Smyjthe-Johnes, talked to me about Mr. Will and my new mistress, spoke of his own sons, and, in a word, was as pleasant as any gentleman could be. There were some letters for his nephew and for his nephew's wife; and when I mentioned this fact, he 'graciously,' to quote Mrs. Barrett, offered to take charge of them. Indeed, the whole establishment seemed oppressed by the weight of the honour done to it, and appeared satisfied that Miss Johnes had made an exceedingly good investment when she married Mr. Will.

I was treated also with more deference after the Earl's visit, and my fellow servants asked me such lots of questions about the Dugdales and Pattenhams, about Oakhill, and my Lord's house in town, and the Dowager's place in the country, that I grew sick and tired of the very name of my master's family.

'After all,' I thought one morning, 'if our old life was anxious, we had variety, at any rate. I do not believe I can stand this much longer.'

An interruption was coming to the monotony for which I was little prepared; it came very soon indeed.

That same evening, I was walking down the elm avenue which people came from far and near to see, when I met two well-dressed men, who proceeded quietly on without taking the least notice of me. I could not tell what made me do it, but when they had traversed some twenty yards, I turned and followed. By the time they reached the house I was close behind them. The hall-door stood open, and on the threshold was Catteron, one of the footmen, lazily

contemplating the landscape. To him the strangers addressed themselves.

'Is Mr. Pattenham within?' asked the elder and stouter of the two.

'No; he is not at home.'

'When do you expect him back?'

'Can't say; he is gone abroad. The Dowager Countess of Dugdale is ill, and sent for him.' Catteron added this piece of information, not out of any civility towards the strangers, whom, indeed, he had treated with scant courtesy, but because he never willingly missed an opportunity of speaking of the Dugdales or their titles. There was a pause—the men, who did not look like gentlemen, though they were well dressed, exchanged glances, then the elder one inquired—

'Is Mr. Pattenham's servant, Walters, here, or has he gone abroad too?'

'No; he is standing behind you;' and thus indicated, I came forward.

'I would like a minute's private conversation with you, sir,' said the spokesman, and seeing that Catteron would not go, and that the stranger would not speak before him, I opened the door of a small cloak-room, and followed the visitor in.

Directly I had done so he closed the door, and said confidentially—

'This is a mighty disagreeable business, Walters. Had Mr. Pattenham been at home I feel no doubt the matter might have been settled in two minutes; but as it is, I must leave a man here—yes, I must.'

'You don't mean to say——' I gasped.

'Yes, I do,' he interrupted. 'Most of his debts were arranged, no doubt; but this one, at any

rate, does not seem to have been settled. No doubt the man felt hurt at being left out in the cold. Anyway, he is very bitter, and so I'm here; and being here, I must leave a man.'

I certainly was no innocent in such matters. I had seen as many writs and witnessed as many arrests as most men who were not sheriffs' officers; and yet the simplest and most timid woman could not have felt more frightened than did I at sight of the writ he handed to me.

The horror of such a thing happening in that house as a man being left in possession, was more than I could bear. Mrs. Barrett—the servants—what should I say to them—what explanation could I give?

'We might leave the place and the country, Mr. Will and I, after such a disgrace had befallen us;' that was what I thought as the stranger pushed me, trembling in every limb, into a seat.

'Let us talk it over, and see what can be done,' he said, not unkindly. 'Mr. Haman told me to ask to see you, if Mr. Pattingham chanced to be out. He knew your master would not mind standing a trifle to keep the matter quiet.'

'You are from Haman, then,' I murmured. Accursed had that name been always in my ears, doubly accursed was it now.

'Yes, and I'll make it straight with him, so as to give you time to get the debt paid. It would have a bad look to seize here; and your master so lately married, too. You had better represent that your master promised to find my man a berth—that he did Mr. Pattingham a service once. (I groaned aloud.) Come, come, you were man enough in London; don't pull a long face now.'

Well, the upshot of it was, that

he went away and his man stayed.

'Look here,' said the latter—as if I was not looking at him—'I'll make things pleasant for you as far as I can. When Mr. Pattingham comes back, you can say a word in my favour, and I am sure, by what I have heard of him, he won't forget I tried to perform a disagreeable duty agreeably. Haman gave me a hint of how the land might lie, and I am not a fool.'

That he certainly was not. Before three days were over, he was the life of the servants' hall. He won Mrs. Barrett's heart by giving her a specific for corns, and he made love indiscriminately to the housemaids and the cook. They were all expecting him to propose, and I, miserable I, knowing all, had to look on and laugh with the rest.

When I returned one day from the nearest village, Catteron said a young gentleman 'was waiting to see Mr. Walters.'

'Pears to me you have more visitors than Mr. Pattingham himself,' remarked Catteron, with a sniff. How it happened I could not tell; but in precise proportion as Mr. Sanders grew in favour, I lost it.

I went into the library where the young gentleman sat.

'Mr. Thomas Walters?' he said.

'At your service, sir,' I answered.

'I have brought Mrs. Pattingham's diamonds; and as my instructions were, in her absence, to deliver them to no one but you, I have waited for your return.'

'But,' I expostulated, 'how does it happen they are sent down here? I understood Mr. Pattingham, they were to remain at Messrs. Rundell and Bridge's.'

'I know nothing about that,' he answered. 'My principals had an order to deliver them here, and I have brought them. Be kind enough to sign your name there,'

and he pushed a paper towards me.

I never told any one, except Mrs. Barrett, those diamonds had come; they were a weight on my mind.

I slept with the diamonds, and I dreamt of them; what a trouble I had no one suspected; no one, unless it might be Mrs. Barrett and Mr. Sanders.

'If I were in your place, Thomas,' said the former to me, 'I would take the plate and the diamonds over to the bank at Lantree to-morrow.'

'I'll take the diamonds, at any rate,' I answered, groaning inwardly over Mrs. Barrett's want of comprehension.

'If she only knew there was a bailiff in the house it would be a comfort,' I considered.

The whole affair was growing too much for me, however; I confessed as much to Mr. Charles Sanders, who was kind and sympathetic, as usual.

'I should not sit up late, old fellow, if I were you to-night; go to bed early, and you will find yourself another man to-morrow.'

Which advice I followed. After only one tumbler of punch, I locked myself in my pantry, where I had latterly slept, resolving that early the next morning I would take my Lady's diamonds to the bank at Lantree.

So great a relief was this resolve to my mind, that I fell into a dreamless sleep, from which I was awakened by a noise as of some one trying my door; then it, the door I had locked, opened, and my friend Mr. Sanders appeared, carrying a lantern cautiously.

'What, Walters, still awake?' he said; then, before I could answer, there came a crashing blow. When I came to myself, the sun was streaming across the pantry, and

I could see the strong-room had been broken into and its contents ransacked.

With a groan, I dragged my body into the passage, where, a few hours afterwards, Catteron found me.

For days and weeks I lay between life and death, and when I recovered, it was to hear from Mr. Will that his grandmother had never been ill; that the whole matter was a preconcerted scheme; that all his debts had been arranged before his marriage; that Mr. Charles Sanders was no bailiff, only a remarkably clever thief, whom the law hoped eventually to catch and punish.

Anything more? Well, yes. Her Ladyship, Mrs. Pattenham, would not believe in my innocence; and, for the sake of peace, I must go.

'Of course I will do all for you I can. This makes no difference to me, Tom?' my master said, but I turned my head away, sick at heart, wounded to the very quick.

'I might be wrong,'—so I stated in a note I left for Mr. Will, when I was strong enough to leave Johnesborough,—'but I would never knowingly see him again till the diamonds were found.'

It seemed a wild-goose chase then, but I got upon the track of them at last.

There is a story hanging to the finding of the diamonds, too long to tell now. Suffice it to say, they were found, though not in time for my Lady to appear in them at Court.

But she was a just woman, and acknowledged her mistake, and did right by me at last; and so I am fain to confess, gentlemen, that the Countess of Dugdale is a brave and stately lady, and that she has made Mr. Will a good wife, and that they both installed me landlord of the 'Dugdale Arms.'

W H I T E

A HUNTING

1979-1

1979-2

THE YACHT 'BANSHEE.'

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

I.

HOW I CAME TO BUY THE 'BANSHEE.'

AT one time of my life I was in very low spirits at the loss of a near and dear relation; and this feeling soon deepened into a sort of depression, which it was impossible to shake off. Though I was what is called 'a writing man,' and working morning, noon, and night, with an enthusiasm that made other occupations an enjoyment, still, the accustomed duties had now become as odious as the thirty lines of Virgil the schoolboy must get by heart before being allowed out to fly his kite. A friendly physician—Sir Duncan Dennison, who had studied thoroughly all the mental ills that the brains of studious men are not merely heirs to, but actually enjoy in strict settlement, such as 'breaking down,' 'breaking up,' or, what is more fatal still, 'overdoing it'—said, in his blunt way, that there were but two alternatives—going abroad, or going to Colney Hatch. 'Clear your head of Isabella and Lord Robert, forswear pothooks and hangers for three months at least, or'—he added mysteriously—'you may be found one morning using a pot-hook or hanger in a way very alarming to your friends. Let's see. Go to Homburg, Baden, Switzerland.'

'Been there,' I said, 'for a dozen years in succession.'

'Well, do you like the sea?'

'I used to, when I was a boy. Once on a time I used to row.'

'The very thing. Get a yacht! Go away—get into storms—run

into danger: be well browned and scorched. You will come back quite boisterous. The very thing!'

It was the very thing. I would get a yacht, and revive my old taste, which had been lying dormant for some twenty years, like my skill at marbles or hand-ball, which I am convinced a day or two's practice would restore. I was delighted at the idea; a faint enthusiasm was kindling within me. The recollections of breezy days; the boat lying down until the rail was under water; the peculiar gurgle or rushing sound of the waves; the independence;—all these things began to come back on me. There might still be a zest found in life, independent of the pothooks and hangers.

The first object was to secure a boat, and to this end I waited on various agents. The first, the Grand Yachting Company, professed to have five hundred twenty-ton cutters, three hundred thirty-ton, two hundred forty-ton, and one hundred schooners of every class and tonnage. I felt certain that I must suit myself at an establishment doing such vast business, and enjoying the confidence of such a varied scale of yachting interests; and that it must be difficult indeed if I could not provide myself in such a fleet. I was asked for a precise statement of my wants; and, to my surprise, found that there were, at most, but three or four vessels that were at all likely to answer to these

requirements. I tried other establishments, and found that where the prices suited the boat did not, and that where the boat suited the price did not. All agreed that to get what would exactly 'suit me' was a question of time; all agreed that in a month or so whole fleets would be coming in to be laid up, and that then would be my opportunity. Yachts, I have since discovered, are very like horses—hard to sell, and yet, strange to say, harder to buy. All the agents brightened and became enthusiastic when a delay was mentioned, and almost scoffed at the notion of the proper craft not being forthcoming.

One morning—it was at the end of September—I received a letter with a black-edged envelope. It ran—

'SIR,—I understand you want a yacht.

'I have got one to sell.

'She is a new boat, cost a deal of money, is fitted handsomely, and will take you anywhere.

'A low price is asked.

'If you come down to Southampton, any day you choose to appoint, I shall show her to you.

'I wish to part with her at once. She is fitted out, having just returned from a voyage.

'Her name, the "BANSHEE."

'I remain,

'Yours sincerely,

'STEPHEN BLACKWOOD.'

I felt that this was a proper business-like man to deal with. There was nothing about him corresponding to the three hundred ton, &c., though there was a bluntness in his style that was almost surly. I started the very next day, and found him at the hotel whence his letter was dated.

He was a tall, black-haired, barrister-faced man, very hard in

the features; one who, with suitable clothes and due amount of scrubbiness, would have had the true money-lending air. He was too genteel, however, for that, and was dressed in the best style. There was not the least nautical flavour about him, which was odd. A tall, Italian-looking woman was sitting with him, whose full, dark eyes expanded as they rested on me.

'Mrs. Blackwood,' he said, as she rose to leave the room. 'Now to business. What do you think of the boat? Does she suit you?'

'I have not seen her.'

'Not seen her? Then we are only wasting time talking. Suppose you go and see her, and return here? She lies in the outer dock; not ten minutes' walk from this place.'

There was something in this style I did not quite relish; but, as it was to be a matter of business, I did not mind. I went straight to the docks, and saw the 'Banshee' lying out in the middle of the basin. There was an indescribable, solemn look about her—a solitary air, as she lay there, which struck me at the very first glance. Her hull was dark, and seemed to rest on the water in a dull, brooding fashion.

'Coffin-built, summut like,' said a voice beside me; 'but the best work is in her. No money was spared on her. Like to go aboard, sir?'

We went on board. The praise given was not too much. She was a beautifully-finished boat; her decks as smooth as a ball-room floor; brass-work, skylights, 'sticks,' spars, running-rigging, standing ditto—everything perfect, and everything handsome.

I went below. At the foot of the stair, to the right and left, were the saloon and ladies' cabin. The former seemed to me singu-

larly gloomy, and somewhat like a dark study in an old house ; but this, I found, was the effect of the sombre wood of which the fittings were made, and which I took to be ebony. This effect was the more curious, as the ladies' cabin was bright with the gayest chintz and pretty hangings, and the light shaded off by pink-lined muslin. The whole, indeed, was exactly the thing for me, save in one respect—the price. Such a craft could not be had under some six or seven hundred pounds, which was much beyond what I could compass.

I returned.

'Well, you have seen the "Banshee,"' he said. 'Do you like her?—and will you take her?'

'I like her, certainly; though there is rather a gloomy, sepulchral look about her—'

His brow darkened. 'What do you mean?' he said, sharply, 'If you admit this sort of fancies, we had better stop here. My time, and probably yours, is too valuable to be wasted.'

'It was one of the sailors,' I said, carelessly, 'who made the remark. His words were, that she was "coffin-like."'

He started up angrily. 'This ends the matter. I decline to sell my boat to you, sir. I must say it is hardly polite of a mere stranger to make such remarks to the owner. I shall *not* sell her.'

'Good,' I said ; 'in any case I fear we should not have come to terms. You give me your opinion of myself with great frankness. I may then tell you that you are too sensitive a vendor for me.'

He looked at me, and laughed. 'I am fretted sometimes. You don't know the bother I have had with this boat. As to her cut and air, I can't help it. Possibly the builder was a gloomy one, or—But come to business. Will you

take her for six hundred pounds ? Take it or leave it at that price.'

This was less than I had expected, but more than I could manage.

'It is much below its value,' I answered ; 'but the truth is, I can't go to such prices. So I must leave it.'

'Why, what *do* you want?' he said ; 'not surely one of those twenty-year old tubs which you can pick up for forty or fifty pounds, and on which you have to lay out a couple of hundred before you can take an hour's sailing. Here,' he said, giving his desk a blow with his fist, 'take her. Take her at five hundred—four hundred. God bless my soul, can't you manage that? Why—'

'I take her,' I said ; and the 'Banshee' was mine.

II.

WHAT I SAW IN THE 'BANSHEE.'

After my purchase of the 'Banshee,' I felt rather depressed than elated. I went to look for the man in charge of her.

'So you've bought her,' he said. 'Well, you've made a good thing of it. There isn't a better boat afloat.'

'But why was he so anxious to be rid of her ?'

The man looked at me steadily. 'Why?' he said ; 'ah ! that's it. She didn't suit him, I s'pose. Nor more than she may suit you ; nor no more than she may the gent to whom you sell her at the end of the season.'

'But he seemed such a strange man,' I said.

'That's it again,' he said ; 'strange men will have strange boats. Not that there is a word to be said again *her*. She's worth double the money.'

The next duty was to find three men and a boy to work the 'Banshee.' That was done in half an hour. There was really nothing to be done to the boat; she was ready for sea; and it was arranged that we should start in the morning.

I had just done dinner at the hotel, when word was brought up that 'Ned Bowden,' the skipper of the boat, wished to speak with me. He was in some confusion.

'Sorry, sir, to put a gentleman to inconvenience; but the fact is I and my mates don't wish to serve. We'd be obliged to you to let us off.'

'Let you off?' I said. 'What's the meaning of this?'

'It looks unhandsome, I know, sir; but it can't be done; and we'd rather not. You see, we've been afloat a long time, and it's takin' men rather short not to let them have a holiday on dry land 'tween vy'ges. And so—sir—'

'I wouldn't keep men,' I said, 'on any terms, who would think of behaving as you have done. There are plenty of as good men to be got. You may go.'

'Thank you; thank you, sir,' said the man, much relieved. 'Don't think hardly of us, for we are more or less driv to it.'

'Exactly,' I said; 'I am at least entitled to know your reasons for such a scandalous desertion.'

He shook his head solemnly. 'Why, there's why's, and why's, you know, sir; and some why's concerns one man, and some another. The boat's a good one, and will take you anywheres and allwheres. And I've nothing against your honour.'

'You may go,' I said.

This was not auspicious as a commencement. But it was to cause no inconvenience; for a handsome Cowes yacht came in

that very night to lay up, and three smart men, and a smarter boy, volunteered on the spot. There was a pleasant breeze blowing, so we determined to get away in the morning.

With that commenced a new and most delightful life. The first day alone showed me what a charming mode of existence yachting was; and I foresaw that very soon, by this agreeable process, I should be quite restored to health and rational enjoyment of life. There was a surprising exhilaration in that fresh, open sea. The blue, salty waves were at their rude gambols, like lions in their more amiable moments. The fresh, piquant air brought back appetite, and seemed to give new strength. The effect, in these small boats, is as though one were standing on a plank in the middle of the ocean, the waves being but a few inches from your feet. You are not, as in the greater vessels, screened off, as it were, from the direct touch of the waves and the breezes that sweep keenly over the surface of the waves. The day seemed to fly by too quickly; and when, about seven o'clock, we dropped anchor in a little harbour, I felt quite in good humour with the 'Banshee,' and could have patted it, as one would a faithful dog.

The boat was brought round to take me ashore, for I was going to dine at an hotel. As I was 'pulled' away by four stout arms, I looked back at my new craft, and was struck by the same curious, dark, sullen look of her hull, and the inky blackness of her rigging against the sky. It gave me the idea of something coiled up—something solemn—and had not the gay, airy look we associate with a yacht. I stepped ashore, and bidding the men be steady and careful, and not neglect their duties, I went to the hotel

and dined. After dinner I sauntered along the pier—always a pleasant and romantic entertainment for one given to ruminating—and then hailed the yacht. In a few moments I heard the faint splash of the oars, and presently could make out the dark outline of the boat as it drew near. It was pulled by the smart boy, as the men were ashore, and it was not yet time for them to return.

I sat upon deck, smoking and looking round at the lights twinkling at the bows of many vessels around me, at the glare of the lighthouse—always a picturesque object—at the amphitheatre of lines of yellow light, that rose in semi-circles on shore, giving the idea of cardboard pricked with a pin. I was sitting on a little camp-stool close to the skylight, when I absently looked through the glass into the cabin, which was lit up, and, to my amazement, saw—yes, saw a woman lying asleep, as it seemed to me, on one of the sofas.

I was almost speechless with indignation. These were the new, steady men, who had brought such characters from their last employer. Here was the wife or sweetheart of one of these fellows; and I remembered now how anxious they had been that I should stop at this place, which they knew well. Much put out—for at this time I had grown nervous and irritable—I called the boy.

'Where is Pile and the others?' ('Jim Pile' was the name of the skipper.)

'At the "Blue Jacket," sir, on the pier.'

'Get the boat.'

I was pulled ashore again, fuming. The 'Blue Jacket' was exactly opposite the landing-stairs. I sent in for the men.

'I want you on board at once,' I said. 'I am greatly displeased.'

'Sorry, sir,' said Jim Pile, who

had an off-hand way with him. 'What have we done agin rule, sir?'

'I'll tell you when we are on deck.'

They rowed away silently. When we were on deck I said to them, in rather a fretful way,

'I tell you this will not do. I have been ordered quiet. If I have only got a yacht to be exposed to this sort of worry, I had better go back at once. It is intolerable.'

'What have we done agin the rules, sir?' again asked Jim Pile.

'Look down there. Who has dared to do this?'

I looked down myself, as they did. The woman had gone. She had got away in some boat of the harbour.

'Very clever.' I went on. 'But I shall be a match for these tricks another time. And now take this warning from me. If it happens again, or anything like it, you will leave me on the instant.'

'God bless us, sir!' said Jim Pile, with some impatience, 'what have the men done? If it were only having a glass at the "Blue Jacket"!—'

'Leave it so,' I said. 'I am content to pass it over for this time. That will do. Go forward now.'

They went away, with a bewildered air. It was very cunning of the woman to have got away so quickly. However, we were to sail in the morning, and the wife, or sweetheart, or whatever she was, would find herself, in vulgar parlance, 'sold.'

III.

THE STORM.

We sailed along all the next day; and a pretty stiff breeze getting up, the 'Banshee' began to show that she was an excellent sea-boat. We

were all satisfied with her, and she was pronounced 'to get along like a spanker'—high nautical praise. During the day I was sitting below in the saloon—an apartment which I could not relish, it was so depressing from its gloom and melancholy. To amuse myself I called in the boy, and we both began to set things in order, clearing out old lockers, which we found filled with empty bottles and the usual odds and ends which accumulate in a yacht. There were empty match-boxes, old pipes, account-books, and a number of torn-up papers, and an old letter or two, also torn up.

Some words on a fragment of these caught my eye. They were: 'I will not trust myself to you alone. You know I am in terror of my life of you. I believe if you got me on board with you, I should not get ashore alive.'

These were strange words, and I pored over them long. To them was assuredly attached some history, but too intelligible, associated with the owner or with one of his guests. The owner, to a certainty; it could be all read in his rough bearing, and, what I was certain of, his almost infernal temper, which, with me, could scarcely be kept within bounds. But then the lady who was with him had scarcely the air of being in 'terror of her life.' She was, indeed, rather confident; and it might be suspected that within her eyes was lurking a devil as violent as his. I speculated long over this.

We were now coasting, and the enchantment of this mode of life began to grow more and more on me. It seemed the highest form of lotos-eating. There was an entertainment in seeing the shore unwind slowly, as though it were a diorama, new and newer objects coming on in front, as others disappeared behind. That headland

had such a name—that village was so called—and there was the light. The entering a little port, with its small harbour, lighthouse, and tiny amphitheatre of houses, is like the discovery of a new country.

That day wore on, and evening began to close. We saw the light of the port we intended to stop at twinkling afar off. By ten o'clock we had dropped anchor. Jim Pile and his men came for leave to go ashore, which was granted, with a wholesome caution. I could not help asking the question, had they any friends or relations at this place. They declared that not one of them had been there before. Good. Then they must be sober, steady, and be back before twelve o'clock.

I was not going ashore myself, but remained on deck, looking on at that pretty night scene. It was a fishing port. The lights were twinkling on shore, and twinkling the more as seen through the dark rigging of the fishing-boats, huddled together as fishing-boats always are. The hours passed away—it came to eleven—to half-past—and then I heard the slow splash of oars. The men were returning punctually. As I stood up to take a few paces up and down—for it had grown chilly—I glanced carelessly down through the skylight, and—thought I saw something—some one below. I looked again. Yes there was a woman lying on the sofa. I looked at her steadily, so that I should know her again. She was asleep, and was in a white dress, with a heavy Indian shawl wrapped up about her.

The men were now alongside. For the moment I did not think of the improbability of their having brought a person thus dressed on board; but as soon as they were on deck I said to Jim Pile:

'You seemed to think I was unjust in reprimanding you all

yesterday. Come down with me to the cabin. Look there,' I added as I entered.

The woman was gone! I passed hurriedly through the forecastle; tried the ladies' cabin—the pantry—the skipper's. She was not there—not in the vessel at all.

Then it all flashed upon me. I felt a cold, creeping chill coming over me, and caught at the table for support.

Jim Pile and the men were at the door waiting, and wondering. I had presence of mind to falter out a clumsy excuse: 'I had thought that they had not "settled up" the place. I wasn't very well that night. Let all go on deck at once.' They went away. Jim Pile with curious, wondering looks.

When they were gone, the cabin had quite another aspect. Each little door seemed as though it was about to open—as though there was something behind it which would issue forth.

I shrank in terror from the place and hurried on deck. It was a fresh and clear night, with a strong breeze blowing. I called Jim Pile aft.

'We must go on to-night,' I said; 'I dare not stay in a place like this.'

'It looks dirty,' he said, glancing at the sky; 'we are snug enough where we are.'

'I must go on to-night,' I said. 'I suppose you don't want me to sit up here on deck all night.'

This strange speech was more directed to my own thoughts, for I knew that I dared not go down to the cabin, and I was ashamed to go ashore again.

The men were a little sulky at this sudden change. The main-sail was hauled up, the anchor raised, and we stood out for sea. I stood there long, and then taking a sudden resolution, went down-stairs again into the cabin.

A sigh of relief as I saw that the lonely room was *vacant*; yet I fancied that the cushions of the sofa showed a dent, as though some one had just been leaning on them.

An overpowering desire had taken possession of me. I *must* search—search carefully and earnestly—for I had conviction that something connected with it would be found.

I turned up the leather cushions hastily, and dragged up the lid of the locker underneath. There was nothing but old boxes, and such *débris* as I had found there before. I made this search fearfully, looking round as though I expected that each quivering shadow behind me would presently take shape as that ghostly figure.

As I replaced the board, and the cushion on the board, I saw something, buried, as it were, in the corner of the sofa. I drew it out: it was black, and squeezed up like a pocket-handkerchief. It was stiff and dried, and in spreading it I saw that it was a little black lace and straw lady's hat, which had evidently been saturated with sea-water, and had grown dry in that corner. I was not usually an observer of trifles, points of female dress and the like, but it seemed familiar, and to be exactly the same as I had seen with the reclining figure.

IV.

HOW I DISPOSED OF THE 'BANSHEE.'

Meanwhile the 'Banshee' had begun to creak and strain, and even plunge. I could hear the wind whistling, the noise of the waves, and the cries of the sailors calling to one another. I came upon deck. The great mainsail was being got down, and was flapping and tumbling on the

deck like some huge sea-monster that had been dragged on board. A man was aloft 'freeing' the high topmast, which was being struck to 'make her snug,' and the trysail was lying ready 'bent,' presently to be hoisted up. These were ominous signs, and Jim Pile, as he came by me, said in a low voice, 'That he wished we were back in port again.'

That night was to be well known in the dismal annals of coast casualties. The winds whistled; the waves rose to the height of great hills; the 'Banshee' was flung and tossed about like a cork. Great seas came and broke over us, sweeping our little deck, that seemed no bigger than a small tray, from end to end. What with the joint roaring of the winds and sea, I had never known such a terrible scene of chaos before; yet, still it had not such terrors for me as what I had seen below.

It was very dark. There was no moon or stars, and yet the white and grey of the waves furnished a sort of dull, leaden light, that came and went. Just as we rose on one tremendous wave, I chanced to glance down through the skylight, and then, once more I caught a glimpse of the ghostly figure reclining on the sofa. I had not time to look, for the sea came, and struck us violently, submerging us all, ship and men.

I caught at the shrouds, and thought at the moment that it was all over; but as the boat righted, I distinctly saw, in that confusion, a white figure emerge from the deck, stand beside me a moment, and then be swept from the deck into the boiling waters with a loud cry!

* * * *

The following day the 'Banshee,' all torn and bruised, was lying in a small harbour, which she had reached providentially. I went

ashore, and took the railway to Southampton, which I reached that very night. I there made certain inquiries about Mr. Stephen Blackwood, and after a day or two, learned that he had married a young wife, with whom he had expected to receive a great deal of money, but had been disappointed owing to the failure of her father, who had been a merchant. They had not lived very happily together, especially since he had made the acquaintance of the French lady, to whom he was now married.

He had been passionately fond of yachting, and used to force his wife to go with him on his first voyages. But he was once caught in a storm off the coast of France, and a sea had swept her overboard. At least, she had been seen standing beside him during the gale, though the men had warned him that she ought to go below; and in a moment or two she was gone.

With some scruples I offered the 'Banshee' for sale, meaning, however, to act the part of an honest vendor, and trusting to find some careless purchaser who would laugh at such scruples. But, strange to say, I cannot find a buyer of any sort. The 'Banshee' was for sale, and is still for sale. So that if any of our nautical readers should—

I ought to mention, at the close of this narrative, that no one 'pooh-poohed' the whole so much as my friendly physician, Sir Duncan. He said, and says still, it was all morbid; that I had been overworked at the time—the nerves unstrung—and that, probably, the late owner was a decent, respectable man, as innocent as any of those children unborn, whose future interests Sir Duncan often took care of.

CARDS OF INVITATION,
BY THOSE WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THEM.

I.—A RECEPTION AT THE WAR OFFICE.

I HAD just returned from the autumn campaign, and my man was busy with my uniform, as I lounged, garbed in a welcome suit of mufti, in an easy-chair in St. James's Street. The looking-glass had told me that my complexion was to be a thing of the past for at least some months to come, and my tailor had found a marked difference in the size of my coats—they had grown too large for me. Yes, I had certainly undergone a very trying ordeal. Those who slumber in club reading-rooms and travel first-class on Swiss railways (the latter luxury, by-the-way, is a great mistake; the cloth coverings of the ‘seconde’ are much to be preferred to the velvet of the ‘première’) know but little of the miseries of those ‘told off’ for duty in a flying column. Awakened from one’s slumbers at the hour usually devoted to the last rubber but four, to tumble off a rickety bed on to a waterproof sheet, and then and there to tub in a pail filled with ditch-water, is anything but pleasant. A meal of half-cooked mutton, eaten whilst dressing, is anything but digestible; and a march of thirty miles before ‘mess’ (the name exactly denotes the character of the banquet) can scarcely be described with veracity as a ‘constitutional.’ But there, the miserable month was over. I could afford to smile at the forty pounds of personal property allowed me by the regulations. Once I had prized the articles amounting to that weight very dearly, in spite of their

homeliness; but now they were merely a collection of tins, plates, pewter flagons, and india-rubber basins—nothing more. I sat smoking my cigar in silence, with visions of a little dissipation in town, and a good deal of shooting in the country, before my eyes. My man continued his brushing and folding, and I was gradually falling into a gentle slumber, when the sharp knock of a passing postman recalled me from the land of dreams.

‘A letter, sir,’ said John, with military brevity. It was a letter—but such a letter! Had the envelope contained a death-warrant I should not have been surprised. Six inches square, at the very least, official paper, and with a pink edition of the royal arms serving as a seal. What did it mean? Had the authorities discovered at last that I had regulated the amount of my baggage during the manoeuvres, after having accepted the matter as a fact that the large drawing-room grand piano weighed only six pounds and a half? Had my Colonel sent in a ‘confidential’ report, complaining of my refusal to dance at county balls? I pondered in deep thought for a moment and then broke the seal. I breathed again as I found that it was merely a letter of invitation from ‘Mr. Secretary Cardwell,’ requesting me to honour a banquet at the War Office on the 13th of September, 1872, with my presence, ‘to meet His Royal Highness the Field - Marshal Commanding-in-Chief.’ In spite

of its civil wording, the document looked very much like an order. The allusion to the presence of that most popular of martinets, 'George, Ranger,' was quite enough to overawe a wearer of scarlet and gold. So, with something like a sigh—for I hate official festivity—I sat down before my desk and penned an humble letter of acceptance to the card of invitation.

As a rule, the War Office is not a very lively place. There is something particularly mournful in the aspect of the courtyard, with its solitary sentry and depressing monument to Sydney Herbert, as viewed from the second window of the 'Rag.' Until the officer commanding-in-chief shifted his head-quarters from Whitehall to Pall Mall, it was quite the thing to hate the houses on 'the other side of the way.' The establishment was regarded as the manufactory of red tape, and the birthplace of that bugbear of soldiers, the system of 'control.' It was believed that in the dismal rooms of 'Subdivision Z' was the great question of coats discussed, and the rows with the Indian Office organized. It is the birthright of a professional man to abuse something, and the War Office was of yore the target for the military sharp-shooters. 'Over the way' was accountable for everything objectionable to the officer and injudicious for the private. The abolition of purchase, the changes of uniform, the thousand and one grievances of which the soldier had to complain, were all attributed to the blundering of the heads of that most unpopular department. When 'the Duke,' attended by his staff, seized a portion of the establishment there was a revulsion of feeling to a certain extent. Pall Mall began to be

tolerable, and men with short whiskers and small moustaches were seen occasionally entering the door nearest to the Carlton Club. Still, people were rather ashamed of the place. The two sentries posted at the portals seemed to be uneasy, and looked as if the Mutiny Act alone prevented them from beating a retreat into the area. Moreover, his Royal Highness refused to change the name of his ancient abode, and still called his office 'The Horse Guards,' thus administering a decided snub to the mansions of Pall Mall. Under these circumstances, I felt that when I accepted 'Mr. Secretary's' invitation I was, to a certain extent, pledging myself to venture into the lion's den.

I had some slight personal knowledge of the War Office. A cousin of mine had entered the place during the Crimean campaign; and in paying him an occasional visit I had discovered that the hall was draughty, and contained a marble bust of the first Duke of Wellington, and that the strangers' room was dull, and possessed two large oil paintings of the 'Judgment of Solomon' and 'Covent Garden Market in the Olden Time.'

'Where did you get those valuable objects of art from?' I asked, on the occasion of one of my periodical calls.

'I am sure I don't know,' he replied, putting his glass up to his eye, and looking at them vacantly; 'I rather think they were left to the nation by somebody or other. They have been here as long as I can remember, and here they will remain until we discover a precedent that will enable us to deal with them.'

'Might send the Solomon picture to the National Portrait Gallery, to keep company with

Brown, of the reign of Charles the Second, and Smith, of the time of George the First,' I suggested.

' That would never do. No one would dare to act upon his own responsibility. Did you notice the sentry at the gate of the courtyard as you came in ?'

' To be sure I did.'

' Do you know how he came to be stationed there ?'

' No,' I confessed.

' Well, it is said that a drunken soldier, who had been discharged, visited the office one Monday morning, some twenty years ago. The man forced himself into the presence of the Secretary, and had to be removed by a policeman, aided by a sentry taken from the Palace hard by. The services of the sentry were called into requisition because only one policeman could be found, and one policeman was proved unequal to the task of ejecting the unwelcome visitor. The officer commanding the Palace guard suggested that a soldier should remain on duty in the War Office in case of a return of the brawler. This offer was accepted, and the soldier was changed every two hours by a successor being posted in his place at the end of every period. This arrangement continued through Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, until the end of the week. It was not dropped on the Sunday, and has been in force ever since !'

' What, for twenty years ?'

' Yes—night and day, for twenty years.'

My cousin seemed to believe the story; and although I have my own doubts about its genuineness, I cannot deny that the tale is not only possible but probable. I, myself, can vouch for having seen the model of a sea-battery in the centre of the hall for years. It has disappeared now—I wonder where it has gone to—perhaps

(after having been refused at home) to Russia. I had more than once visited other parts of the War Office, and had come away with the idea that the place consisted of extremes. It reminded me very strongly of Regent Street and Soho. Now I was in a room with a painted ceiling and a gorgeously decorated wall—now in a squalid cupboard that was better suited to dogs than to men. Long passages and mysterious corridors —here and there a glass case containing a sleepy messenger or a weary commissionnaire. At lunch-time, a general atmosphere of roast mutton; at other hours, a smell of leather and old pay lists. There, that was about my notion of the War Office on days of relaxation ; I mean, when the place was given over to Mr. Cardwell and his employés. The establishment certainly looked brighter when I visited it on the 13th of last September.

Of course, uniform was *de rigueur*. This being the case, I assumed my tunic and those easily tarnished gold belts which are only worn (see the regulation) at levées, balls, and other ' entertainments.' As I entered the brightly-illuminated hall, I was surprised to find the apartment a mass, not of red tape, but of red cloth. The floor was covered with red cloth, the walls were festooned with red cloth, and red cloth appeared again on the ceiling. In fact, the rule seemed to have been, ' when in doubt, hang up a good deal of scarlet.' I felt, for the moment, that I was about to ' assist' at a very gorgeous execution. This rather unpleasant sensation soon passed away, as I met on every side the cheerful faces of gaily garbed friends and acquaintances. I was ushered up the really fine staircase and conducted into the apartment usually sacred to pri-

vate secretaries and their visitors, now converted for the nonce into an ante-room. There were a large number of the invited waiting the arrival of the guests of the evening. I may mention here that Mr. Secretary Cardwell had provided three saloons for the use of the diners. We smoked in the ante-room after the banquet, fed in the council-chamber, and the third apartment was reserved for the use of the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge. As a matter of fact, the third saloon was never entered by any one; as their Royal Highnesses, with the proverbial geniality of English officers, preferred to mix with the company in the ante-room to smoking a couple of cigars *tête-à-tête*. By-and-by the strains of 'God save the Queen' announced the fact that the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, and 'The Prince,' had put in an appearance. Without further ceremony, a move was made to the door, and we soon found ourselves in the presence of royalty and the banquet.

The Secretary of State's room at the War Office is a splendid place. It contains six large windows, from which may be seen (in the daytime) the garden of Marlborough House, and a part of the Prince's stables. The ceiling of this very lofty apartment is beautifully decorated with pictures of Venus rather than of Mars, and the walls are bright with trophies of arms, in which the spears of lances have the preference. It once served as the dining-room of the Duke of Cumberland, so unpleasantly remembered from his Culloden exploits as 'the Royal Butcher'; and many are the stories that are told of the room and its late owner. If I did not fear to weary my readers, I might fill pages and

pages of 'London Society' with these nearly-forgotten tales. As I stood near the horseshoe table, covered with costly plate and surrounded by the wearers of gorgeous uniforms, I could not help recalling an anecdote, the relation of which may not be out of place in this sketchy little article. Its brevity must serve as a recommendation. More than a hundred years ago a dinner-party was given in this very room, of which the Duke was the host, and several of his friends were the guests. Amongst those honoured with an invitation was a poor old officer, who had been asked, it is said, for the purpose of serving as a jest to the more wealthy diners. During the banquet, this poor old officer, who held no higher rank than lieutenant, was silent and depressed. The joke was a failure, and he was soon forgotten. After dinner, a foreign decoration was passed round the table by the Duke of Cumberland for inspection, and was handed in due course to the lieutenant. Before the party separated, his Royal Highness discovered that the star had not been returned to him. He asked for it, and it could nowhere be found. With gentlemanly consideration he requested his guests to turn out their pockets before him. His command met with but one refusal—the lieutenant declined to obey him, and left the presence, branded as a thief. The next morning the decoration was discovered under the table by one of the servants, and was handed to the Duke. His Royal Highness immediately commanded the lieutenant to appear before him; and then, under some pressure, the old officer confessed that he would not turn out his pockets the night before because they contained food that he had secreted for the

use of his sick wife and starving children. And at this point my story ends. I know not what became of the poor fellow, the hero of my tale; but, from the character of the Duke of Cumberland, I fear that promotion (at least, in the case of the old lieutenant) was not 'rapid in the British army.'

The 'menu' shows that Mr. Secretary Cardwell was anxious to wipe out the recollection of regulation 'bully' and 'control' beef. The list of good things was printed in gold, red, and blue, on a card of green. The 'menu' was decorated with medallions containing the royal arms, surrounded by the collar of the Garter, a view of an encampment in which hired horses were a prominent feature, and a not very imposing sketch of Stonehenge.

Some care was taken to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the German and French guests. 'Bombs à la Strasburg,' and 'Jambon à la Wagram,' were conspicuous by their absence. Apropos of our foreign friends—in the course of the evening I saw one of the officers to whose charge they had been entrusted during the manœuvres, and asked him how he got on with them.

'Oh, very well,' he replied. 'I had a little difficulty with the representative of the United States, but the rest were excessively quiet.'

'What did the Yankee do?'

'He was a good fellow enough, but had a rooted objection to horseriding. The third day he refused to mount, and we had to provide him with a Hansom cab during the rest of the campaign. On more than one occasion he formed the centre of a hollow square.'

'What, in a cab?'

'Yes, in full uniform. Our

men didn't pay much attention to him—they thought he was the commanding officer of some country Volunteer Corps.'

The banquet was like ordinary State dinners. It was enlivened by the strains of the Grenadier band, and I could not help contrasting the neat programme of the Guards with the rather pretentious card of the menu. The chief piece was a pot-pourri of 'the national airs of Europe,' which preceded Gungl's 'Abschied von München' valse, and followed the 'Agnus Dei' of Mozart. We were only asked to drink one toast, 'The Queen,' and then we retired *en masse* into the ante-room.

And now, having disposed of the place, and discussed the banquet, I may be permitted to turn to the guests. A mass of colour, lighted up with jewels and gold. Plenty of scarlet, and a little blue. Here, standing in a group of veterans, was 'the officer commanding-in-chief.' He wore his field-marshall's uniform and all his medals, and looked the very picture of a soldier. I could not help feeling that the foreigners present must have envied us the liberty of the mess-room, which permits a prince of the royal blood, and the supreme head of the army, to chat with his inferiors with perfect ease—nay, even with familiarity. The Duke's friends were 'Charlies,' 'Billies,' and 'Harries'; and yet the familiarity was not of that kind which breeds contempt. Not far from his Royal Highness was Mr. Cardwell, in the richly-embroidered uniform of a Cabinet minister. In spite of his sword, and gold and blue tail-coat, he looked every inch of him a civilian. He talked affably with many of his guests, paying special attention to the representatives of foreign states. He was particularly cheerful, and

reminded me strongly of a young author who had passed through that trying ordeal, the first night of a first piece. He had reason to be satisfied, for certainly the autumn manœuvres had proved a gigantic success. Standing near the War Secretary, and talking to his own lieutenant-colonel (wearing the gorgeous uniform of the 10th Hussars), was the Heir-Apparent to the throne himself. Looking very little the worse for his severe illness, the Prince of Wales seemed to have quite recovered from the shock of being claimed as a prisoner by a regiment of militia. And now I come to notabilities of lesser mark. Here was the commanding officer of one of the household brigades (a plunger, by-the-by), who had secured eternal renown by painting the breastplates of his troopers a dark brown. I almost regretted that we had not enjoyed the excitement of a German invasion that we might have tried conclusions with the 'Uhlans.' With Marshall's 'heavies,' and the 'light bobs' of Baker, we would prove a match for all the cavalry in the world. So I thought — after dinner! .

Among the very few civilians present I 'noticed' (as they say in the 'Morning Post') the rising man at the War Office. Bearing the name of one of England's greatest poets, and 'bearded like the pard,' he seemed quite at his ease amusing the warriors who surrounded him. I was not surprised at this, as this distinguished individual had smelt gunpowder, not on a parade ground but at the seat of war. Many years ago, when we had made a fine mess of the Crimean campaign, he was despatched to Balaclava to set things to rights. No easy task, but one very easily accomplished. As I looked at him I could not

help recalling some of the stories I had heard related of his nerve and *sang-froid*. The very day of his arrival in the Crimea was not without adventure. He was told off to a tent that had been used as a dead-house! Instead of being alarmed he secured a little chloride of lime, and finding that no other accommodation was to be had, made himself as much at home as if he had been occupying his own house in London. Before the enemy he was as calm as in Pall Mall. Assuredly there are many heroes who are not soldiers, even as there are many soldiers who, I regret to say, have no chance of ever shining as heroes. Another civilian of note was the permanent Under-Secretary, a gentleman who, when he represented the Treasury, was described in 'the House' as an official who had nothing to do but to smoke 'cigars.' Fresh from Switzerland, he looked nearly as bronzed as the warriors of the autumn campaign; and from his tone and style it struck me that he was the very last man in the world to be idle when there was work to do.

To return to the military. There, standing near an officer (who, by-the-by, was as much respected by the Prussian chiefs in the past as he is liked by the Woolwich cadets in the present), was a veteran—a veteran who, in spite of his years, is still known as 'the handsomest man in the service.' If you see his long white locks you may be sure that 'the Duke' is near at hand. Next to him was the popular general who is punningly called, at Aldershot, 'the Hope of the British army.' A fine old soldier, who knows more about cavalry than infantry—a man to lead a Balaclava charge, not to fight a battle of Inkermann. A little bit of a martinet, perhaps, but as kindly as the great Wel-

lington himself. I remember that rather an amusing story was told about him when he commanded an army during the first autumn manœuvres—the series of 1871. Before the flying column was despatched from Cove Common he made a tour of inspection. Of course his appearance provoked a general salute. As he was returning to his quarters he met a militiaman, who passed him without paying him what is called by the Queen's Regulations a 'compliment.'

'Here, you sir!' cried the General. 'Do you know who I am?'

'Of course I do—General—'

'Then why don't you salute me?'

'Well, you *are* in a precious hurry,' replied the militiaman. 'I *was* going to salute you, but now, as you have made such a fuss about it, I just shan't!'

History is silent regarding the fate of the presumptuous private—I know not whether he was shot, hanged, or drawn and quartered. I believe that if he had fallen into the hands of General Maxwell he would have had a fair chance of—well, never mind, the officer I have

named does not love the militia. And with these short notes I leave the subject of the guests. However, I may say that, unhappily, there is a strong family resemblance amongst soldiers. A moustache, short hair, and military whiskers — *cum* a nose either Grecian or Roman—and there you have 'the portrait of an officer' complete. So I found at the banquet of the 13th of last September; and, as everything in the army is arranged 'by regulation'—the same thoughts strike the same men, even as the same words are said and the same things are done—the result is a commonplace, uninteresting uniformity. Under these circumstances, I was not altogether sorry when the signal was given to disperse. I put on my military overcoat, made my way into Pall Mall, walked up St. James's Street, and was home. I lighted a cigar, and then shifted Mr. Cardwell's letter of invitation from the right side of my chimney-glass to the left; for the reception at the War Office had become, like many other things, a story of the past.



'NO INTENTIONS.'

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,' 'VERONIQUE,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.

IT is towards the close of a long, bright day in June, that a young collegian enters, somewhat hastily, the courtyard of an inn on the outskirts of one of our university towns.

'Holloa there!' he calls sharply to a skulking ostler, who recognises him with a touch of the forelock; 'bring my horse round, will you, and be quick about it!'

As the ostler disappears to obey his orders the young man leans lazily against the stable wall, and the traces of some secret care or annoyance are very visible upon his countenance. He ought to possess neither; for he is young, good-looking, affluent, and of high birth, being the second son of the Earl of Norham: but what charm is there to make even earls' sons invulnerable against the effects of the woes which they create for themselves? A few months back Eric Keir almost believed that the world was made for him and men in the same position as himself; to-day, he would give the world, were it his own, to be able to retrace his steps and undo that which is irremediable. And yet he has not completed his two-and-twentieth year!

As the ostler brings his horse—a fine bay animal of some value—up to his side, Eric Keir starts as though he had been dreaming, and seizing the reins abruptly, is about to spring into the saddle. His foot, however, has but reached the stirrup, when he is accosted from the other side.

'Why, Keir, old fellow! what an

age it is since we met! Where have you been hiding yourself? I seem to have seen scarcely anything of you during the whole term.' And the hand of Saville Moxon, a fellow student, though not at the same college, is thrust forward eagerly to take his own.

At which, Eric Keir descends to earth again with an appearance of being less pleased than embarrassed at this encounter with his friend, who is, moreover, intimately acquainted with all the members of his family.

'If you have not seen me, Moxon, it is your own fault,' he replies, moodily; 'for you know where to find me when I am at home.'

'Ah! exactly so, my dear fellow,—when you are at home; but have you any distinct recollection of when you last practised that rather negative virtue? For my part, I can affirm that you have sported the oak on, at least, a dozen occasions during the last two months, when I have been desirous of palming my irreproachable company upon you. What do you do with yourself out of college hours?'

At this question, innocent though it appears, Keir visibly reddens, and then tries to cover his confusion by a rough answer.

'Much the same as you do, I suppose;—much the same as every man does who is condemned to be cooped up for three parts of the year in this musty old town: try to forget that there is such a place.'

But Saville Moxon is not to be put out of temper so easily.

'By riding out of it, as you are going to do now,' he says, with a light laugh, as he lays his hand upon the horse's mane. 'Where are you bound to, Eric?'

'What business is that of yours?' is trembling upon the lips of Eric Keir; but he represses the inclination to utter it, and substitutes the answer, 'Nowhere in particular.'

'Then don't let me detain you. I want to speak to you, but I can walk by your side a little way;—or, stay: I dare say they have an animal in the stables they can let me have, and we'll take a gallop together—as we used to do in the old days, Keir.'

But to this proposal Eric Keir appears anything but agreeable.

'By no means,' he rejoins, hastily. 'At least, I know they have nothing you would care to mount; and I am quite at your service, Moxon, if you wish to speak to me. Here, ostler! hold my horse.'

'But why should I keep you from your ride?'

'Because I prefer it;—prefer, that is to say, speaking to a friend quietly to howling at him across the road. Let us turn out of this courtyard, where every wall has ears and every window a pair of eyes. And now what is your business with me?'

The young men have gained the road by this time, which is sufficiently removed from the town to be very dusty, and shaded by leafy trees.

'Who would ever have thought of meeting you out here, Keir?' is Moxon's first remark. 'And how long is it since you developed a taste for country lanes and hedges?'

'I don't admire quickset hedges more than I ever did; but when a man rides for exercise, one direction is as good as another.'

'But what induced you to remove your horse from Turnhill's? Didn't they do justice to him?'

'Well—yes—' in a hesitating manner. 'I had no particular fault to find with them; but these stables are more convenient.'

'Less so, I should have imagined. Why, you have nearly a mile more to walk to them.'

'Perhaps I like walking: any way, that's my business. What's yours?'

At this curt rejoinder, Saville Moxon turns round and regards him steadily in the face.

'What is the matter, Keir?' he says, kindly. 'Are you ill? And, now I come to look at you, you have certainly grown much thinner since I saw you last; and, if you were not such a lazy fellow, I should say you had been overworking yourself.'

To which Keir responds, with a harsh laugh—

'Yes, Moxon, that's it—too much study. It's an awfully bad thing for young fellows of our age—so trying to the constitution! Ha! ha! ha!'

'But you really don't look yourself, Keir, for all that. I am afraid you must have been living too fast. Don't do it, dear old fellow—for all our sakes.'

The affectionate tone touches some chord in Eric Keir's heart, and he answers, almost humbly—

'Indeed I have not been living fast, Moxon; on the contrary, I think I have been keeping better hours this term than usual. One comes so soon to the conviction that all that kind of thing is not only degrading, but wrong. Yet one may have troubles, nevertheless. How are all your people at home?'

'Very well indeed, thank you; and that brings me to the subject of my business with you. It is odd I should have met you this after-

noon, considering how much separated we have been of late; for if I had not done so, I should have been obliged to write.'

'What about?'

'I had a letter from your brother Muiraven this morning.'

'Ah!—more than I had: it's seldom either of them honour me.'

'Perhaps they despair of finding you—as I almost began to do. Any way, Lord Muiraven's letter concerns you as much as myself. He wants us to join him in a walking tour.'

'When?'

'During the vacation, of course.'

'Where to?'

'Brittany, I believe.'

'I can't go.'

'Why not? it will be a jolly change for you. And my brother Alick is most anxious to be of the party. Fancy what fun we four should have!—it would seem like the old school days coming over again.'

'When we were always together, and always in scrapes,' Keir interrupts, eagerly. 'I should like to go.'

'What is there to prevent you?'

His face falls immediately.

'Oh! I don't know—nothing in particular—only, I don't fancy it will be such fun as you imagine; these tours turn out such awful failures sometimes; besides—'

'Besides—what?'

'It will be a great expense; and I'm rather out of pocket this term.'

'That is no obstacle, for you are to go as Muiraven's guest. He says especially—let me see, where is the letter?—producing it from his pocket as he speaks. 'Ah! here it is: "Tell Eric, he is to be my guest, and so are you"—though, for the matter of that,' continues Moxon, as he refolds the letter and puts it in the envelope, 'my accepting his offer, and your accept-

ing it, are two very different things.'

'I can't go, nevertheless; and you may write and tell him so.'

'You had better write yourself, Keir; you may be able to give your brother the reason, which you refuse to me.'

After this, they pace up and down for a few minutes in silence: minutes which appear long to Eric Keir, for he pulls out his watch meanwhile to ascertain the hour.

'Keir! are you in debt?' says Moxon.

'Not a penny—or, at all events, not a penny that I shall be unable to pay upon demand. Has any one been informing you to the contrary?'

'No one—it was but a surmise. I hope, then,—I hope there is no truth in the rumour that has reached me, that you find more charms in a certain little village, not twenty miles from Oxford, than in anything the old town contains!'

Saville Moxon is hardly prepared for the effect which his words produce. For Eric Keir stops short upon the country path which they are traversing, and the veins rise upon his forehead, and his whole face darkens and changes beneath the passion which he cannot help exhibiting, although he is too courteous to give vent to it without further cause.

'What village?' he demands quickly.

'Fretterley!'

Then the knowledge that he is in the wrong, and gossip in the right, and that something he is very anxious to keep secret is on the verge of being discovered, gets the better of Eric Keir's discretion, and he flares out in an impetuous manner, very much in character with his quick, impulsive nature—

'And what the d—l do your

confounded friends mean by meddling in my affairs?'

'Who said they were friends of mine?' retorts Moxon; and the laugh with which he says it is as oil cast on the flame of Eric Keir's wrath.

'I will allow of no interference with anything I choose to do or say. I am not a child, to be followed, and gaped at, and cackled about, by a parcel of old women in breeches; and you may tell your informant so, from me, as soon as you please.'

'Keir, this is folly, and you know it. Fretterley and its doings are too near at hand to escape all observation; and the fact of your visiting there, and the Vicar of the parish having three very pretty daughters, is quite sufficient to set the gossips talking; but not to provoke such an ebullition of anger from yourself.'

'I don't care a fig about the Vicar, or his daughters either! But I do care to hear that I can't ride a mile in one direction or another without all Oxford talking of it. I hate that style of feminine cackle which some of the fellows of the college have taken up; and I say again, that they are a set of confounded meddlers; and if I catch any one of them prying into my concerns, I won't leave him a whole bone in his body!'

'You are childish!' exclaims Moxon. 'As I repeated the report, Keir, I suppose I am one of the "confounded meddlers" you allude to, and it may not be safe for me to remain longer in your company. And so, good day to you, and a better spirit when we meet again.' And turning abruptly from him, he commences to walk in the direction of the town. But slowly, and somewhat sadly: for he has known Eric Keir from boyhood, and, imperious as he is with strangers, it is not often he exhibits

the worst side of his character to his friends.

For a moment—whilst pride and justice are struggling for the mastery within him—Eric looks at the retreating figure and then, with sudden impulse, he strides hastily after Moxon, and tenders him his hand.

'Forgive me, Saville! I was wrong—I hardly knew what I was saying.'

'I was sure you would confess it, sooner or later, Eric; your faults are all upon the surface.'

And then they shake hands heartily, and feel themselves again.

'But about this Fretterley business,' says Eric, after a slight hesitation: 'stop the gossip as much as lies in your power, there's a good fellow! For I swear to you I have no more intention of making love to the Vicar's daughters, than I have to the Vicar himself.'

'I never supposed you had. But when young and fashionable men persist in frequenting one locality, the lookers-on will draw their inferences. We are not all earls' sons, remember, Eric; and you dwell in the light of an unenviable notoriety.'

'Unenviable indeed, if even one's footsteps are to be dogged! And fancy what my father would say, if such a rumour reached his ears!'

'He would think nothing of it, Keir. He knows that you love him too well to dream of making a *mésalliance*.'

'Who talks of a *mésalliance*?' interposes the other, hurriedly.

'Myself alone. The Vicar's daughters, though exceedingly handsome and, no doubt, very amiable girls, are not in the position of life from which Lord Norham expects you to choose a wife. He thinks a great deal of you, Eric.'

'More's the pity; he had much better build his hopes on Muiraven, or Cecil.'

'Oh! Cecil will never marry. Young as he is, he is marked out for a bachelor. And as for Muiraven, he will, in all probability, have to sacrifice his private instincts to public interests. Besides,'—in a lowered voice—'you should never forget that, were anything to happen to Muiraven, the hopes of the family would be set upon you.'

'Don't talk such nonsense, Moxon. Muiraven's life is worth ten of mine, thank God! and Cecil and I mean to preserve our liberty intact, and leave marriage for the young and the gay: yourself, *par exemple*.'

'Call a poor devil who has nothing but his own brains to look to for a subsistence, young and gay? My dear boy, you'll be a grandfather before I have succeeded in inducing any woman to accept my name and nothing a year.'

'Ugh!'—with a shudder—'what an awful prospect! I'd as soon hang myself.'

'Well, it needn't worry you just yet,' says Moxon, with a laugh. 'But I must not keep you any longer from your ride. Shall you be in your rooms to-morrow evening, Keir?'

'Probably—that is, I will make a point of being there, if you will come and take supper with me. And bring over Summers and Charlton with you. And look here, Moxon,—stop this confounded rumour about me, at all hazards, for heaven's sake!"

'If there is no truth in it, why should you object to its circulation?' inquires Moxon, bluntly.

'There is no truth in it. I hardly know the man by sight, or his daughters; but you are aware of my father's peculiarities, and how the least idea of such a thing would worry him.'

'We should have Lord Norham down here in no time, to find out

the truth for himself. So it's lucky for you, old fellow,'—observing Keir's knitted brows—'that there's nothing for him to find out.'

'Yes—of course; but I hate everything in the shape of town-talk, true or otherwise.'

'There shall be no more, if I can prevent it, Keir. Good-bye!'

'Good-bye, till to-morrow evening; and don't be later than ten.'

He remains on the spot where Saville Moxon left him for a moment, and then turns, musingly, towards the courtyard of the inn again.

'What on earth can have put Fretterley into their heads,' he ponders, 'when I have been so scrupulously careful, that even the ostler at the village inn doesn't know me by my right name? It's an awful nuisance, and will entail a move at the very time when I can least afford it. My usual luck!' And, with a shrug of the shoulders, Eric Keir re-enters the stable-yard. The man is still waiting there with his horse, and, when the gentleman is mounted, he touches his cap and asks when he may be expected to return.

'Impossible to say,' is the unsatisfactory rejoinder; and in another minute Keir has driven his spurs into the animal's side and is galloping, to make up for lost time, along the road which leads —— to Fretterley.

As he rides hurriedly and carelessly along, his thoughts are conflicting and uneasy. His impulsive and unthinking nature has led him into the commission of an act which is more than rash—which is unpardonable, and of which he already bitterly repents; and he sees the effect of this youthful folly closing about him and hedging him in, and the trouble it will probably entail, stretching out over

a long vista of coming years, to end perhaps only with his life.

He knows that his father (a most loving and affectionate father, of whom he has no fear beyond that begotten by the dread of wounding his affection) cherishes high hopes for him and expects great things—greater things than Eric thinks he has the power of performing. For Lord Muiraven, though a young man of sterling merit—'the dearest fellow in the world,' as his brothers will inform you—is not clever: he knows it himself, and all his friends know it, and that Eric has has the advantage over him, not only in personal appearance, but in brains. And though it would be too much to affirm that Lord Norham has ever wished his sons could change places, there is no doubt that, whilst he looks on Muiraven as the one who shall carry on his titles to a future generation, his pride is fixed on Eric; and the ease with which the young fellow has disposed of his university examinations, and the passport into society his agreeable manners have gained for him, are topics of unfailing interest to the Earl.

And it is this knowledge, added to the remembrance of a motherless childhood sheltered by paternal care from every sorrow, that makes his own conduct smite so bitterly on the heart of Eric Keir. How *could* he have done it? Oh! what a fool—what an ungrateful, unpardonable fool he has made of himself! And there is no way out of the evil: he has destroyed that which will not bear patching—his self-respect! As the conviction presses home to him, tears, which do him no dishonour, rise to his eyes, yet are forced back again, as though to weep had been a sin. How much the creatures suffer who cannot, or who dare not, cry! God gave ready tears to women, in

consideration of their weakness—it is only strong hearts and stronger minds that can bear torture with dry eyes.

But there is little trace of weakness left on the face of Eric Keir, as, after an hour's hard riding, he draws rein before the village inn of Fretterley. The young collegian seems well known there; for before he has had time to summon the ostler, the landlord himself appears at the front door, to ease him of his rein, and is shouting for some one to come and 'old Mr. 'Amilton's 'orse' while he draws 'Mr. 'Amilton's beer.'

'Mr. 'Amilton' appears to respond but languidly to the exertions made on his behalf; for he drinks the beer which is handed him, mechanically, and, without further comment, turns on his heel, much to the disappointment of the landlord, who has learned to look regularly for the offer of one of those choice cigars of which the young gentleman is usually so lavish.

'Something up there, I bet,' he remarks to the partner of his bosom; 'getting tired of her, I shouldn't wonder: they all does it, sooner or later. Men will be men.'

'Men will be men! men will be *brutes*, you mean!' she retorts in her shrill treble; and, from the sound of her voice, the landlord thinks it as well not to pursue the subject any further.

Not afraid of her—oh dear no! What husband ever was afraid of anything so insignificant as the weaker vessel?—only—Well, landlord, have it thine own way; it does us no harm!

Meanwhile Eric Keir has walked beyond the village, perhaps a quarter of a mile, to where a small farm cottage, surrounded by a garden of shrubs, stands back from the highway. He pushes open the painted wicket with his foot, more

impetuously than he need have done, and advances to the hall door. Before he can knock or ring, it is thrown open to him, and a woman flings herself upon his neck.

She is a girl still, though several years older than himself; but a woman is in the glow of youth at five-and-twenty: and this woman has not only youth but beauty.

'I wish you would remember, Myra, that I am standing at the front door, and reserve these demonstrations of affection for a more private place. I have told you of it so often.'

He disengages her arms from his throat as he speaks, and her countenance lowers and changes. It is easy to see that she is quick to take offence, and that the repulse has wounded her. So they pass into the sitting-room in silence, and whilst Eric Keir, monarch of all he surveys, throws himself into an easy chair, she stands by the table, somewhat sulkily, waiting for him to make the next advances.

'Is old Margaret at home, Myra?'

'I believe so.'

'Tell her to bring me some claret. I seem to have swallowed all the dust between this and Oxford.'

She does his bidding, bringing the wine with her own hands, and when she has served him, she sits down by the window.

'Come here, child,' he says presently, in a patronizing yet authoritative voice that accords strangely with his boyish exterior. 'What's the matter with you to-day? why won't you speak to me?'

'Because you don't care to hear me speak,' she answers in a low tone, full of emotion, as she kneels beside his chair. She has large, lustrous, dark eyes, and soft brown hair that flows and curls about her neck, and a pair of passionate red

lips that are on a dangerous level with his own. What man could resist them? But Eric Keir's moustached mouth bends down to press her upturned forehead only. It is evident that she has lost her power to charm him. Yet his reply is not only patient, but kind.

'What has put that nonsense into your head? Don't make more worries than you need, Myra: we have enough already, heaven knows!'

'But why haven't you been to see me for so many days, then? You don't know how long the time seems without you! Are you getting tired of me, Eric?'

'Tired!—with a smile that is sadder than a sigh. 'It is early days for you and me to talk of getting tired of each other, Myra. Haven't we made all kinds of vows to pass our lives together?'

'Then why have you been such a time away?'

'I have had business to detain me; it was impossible to come before.'

'What sort of business?'

'Engagements—at college and amongst my friends.'

'Friends whom you love more than me!' she retorts quickly, her jealous disposition immediately on the *qui vive*.

'It is not fair for you to say so, Myra. I can give you no greater proof of my attachment than I have already given.'

'Ah! but I want more, Eric. I want to be with you always: to leave you neither day nor night: to have the right to share in your pleasures and your pains.'

He frowns visibly.

'More pains than pleasures, as you would find, Myra. But it is impossible: I have told you so already; the circumstances of the case forbid it.'

'How can I tell, when you are absent, if you are always thinking

of me?—if some other woman does not take my place in your heart?

' You must trust me, Myra. I am a gentleman, and I tell you that it is not the case—that it never will be.'

' Ah! but you cannot tell—you cannot tell!' And here she falls to weeping, and buries her face upon the arm of his chair.

' My poor girl!' says Keir, compassionately.

He does not love her—that is to say, he does not love as he thought he did three months ago, when he believed that he was doing a generous and chivalrous thing in raising her from her low estate to the position she now occupies, and swearing unalterable fidelity at her feet—but he feels the deepest pity, both for her and for himself—and he would wipe out the past with his blood, if it were possible.

' My poor girl—my poor Myra!' stroking the luxuriant hair which is flung across his knee—' we have much to forgive each other! Did ever man and woman drag each other more irreparably down than we have done?'

' You have ceased to love me—I know you have!' she continues, through her tears.

' Why should you torture me with such an accusation,' he says, impatiently, as he shakes himself free of the clinging arms, and, rising, walks to the window, ' when I have already assured you that it is not true? What have I done to make you imagine I am changed?'

' You do not come to see me—you do not caress me—you do not even look at me as you used to do.'

' Good heavens! for how long do you expect me to go on "looking"—whatever that operation may consist of?'

' Oh, Eric! you cannot deceive me: you know you are sorry that we ever met.'

Sorry—ay, God knows that he

is sorry; but he will not tell her so. Yet neither will he fly to her embrace, as three months back he would have done, to assure her that she does his love a cruel wrong by the suspicion. He only stands quietly by the open window, and taking a cigar from his case, lights it and commences smoking; whilst she continues to sob, in an angry, injured manner, by the arm-chair where he left her.

' Myra! I have but a short time to stay here to-day; why shouldn't we pass it pleasantly together? Upon my word, if you go on like this every time we meet, you will make the place too hot to hold me. Come—dry your eyes, like a good girl, and tell me what you have been doing since I saw you last.'

She dashes away her tears, and rises from her kneeling posture; but there is still a tone of sullenness or pride in the voice with which she answers him.

' What should I have been doing, but waiting for your arrival? I should have gone to Oxford, most probably, and tried to find your rooms, if you had not appeared this evening.'

' You had better not attempt that,' he says, decisively.

' But you neglect me, Eric: even old Margaret remarks it; and the Vicar said—'

' The Vicar!'—starting. ' When did you see the Vicar?'

' The day before yesterday, when he called here.'

' Who let him in?'

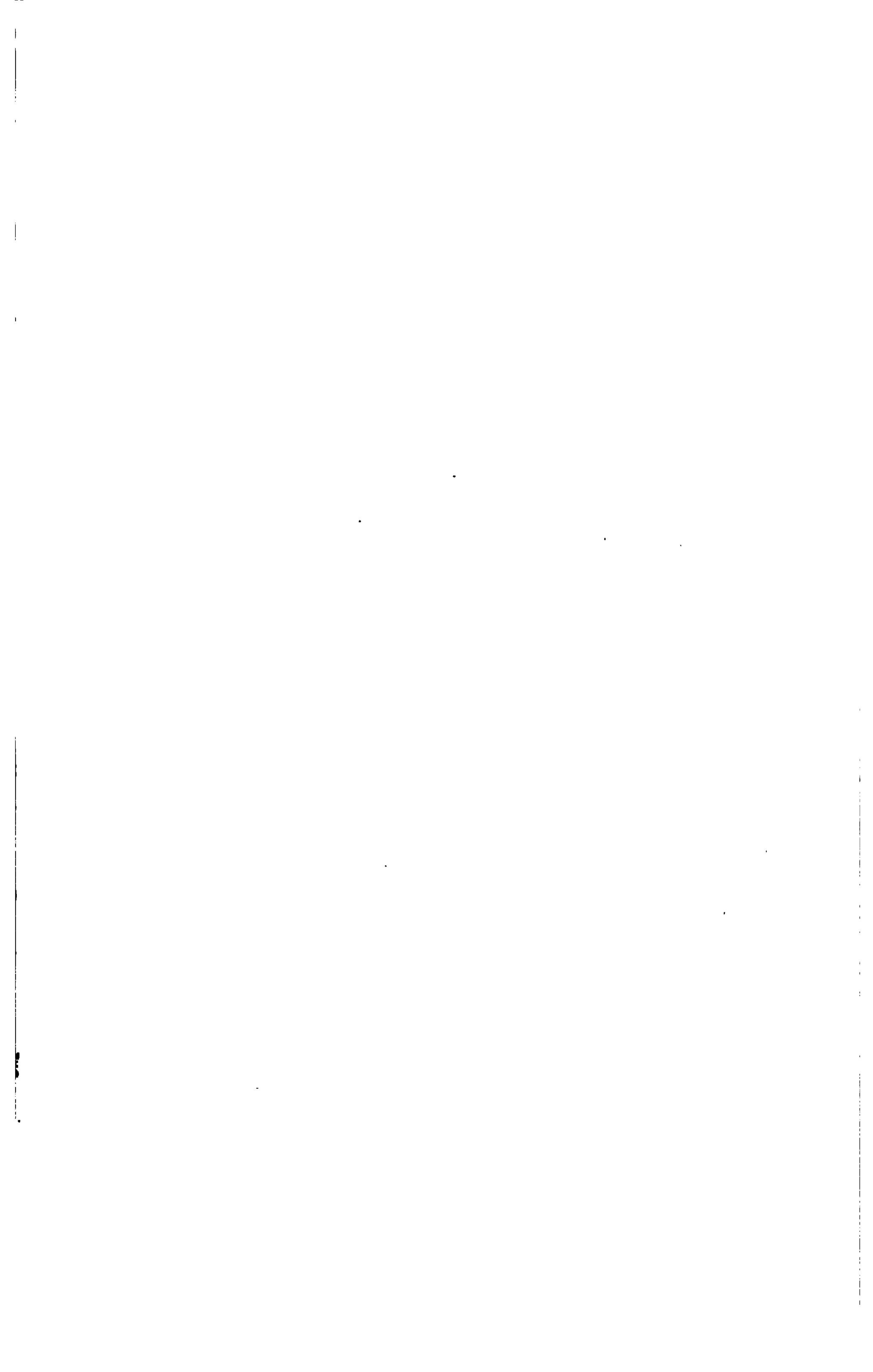
' I did!'—rather defiantly. ' Old Margaret was out.'

' And what communication passed between you?'

' He asked if my name was Mrs. Hamilton?—and I said "Yes."'

' What on earth made you say so?'

' Well—haven't you always called me Mrs. Hamilton? Isn't it the name I go by in the village?'

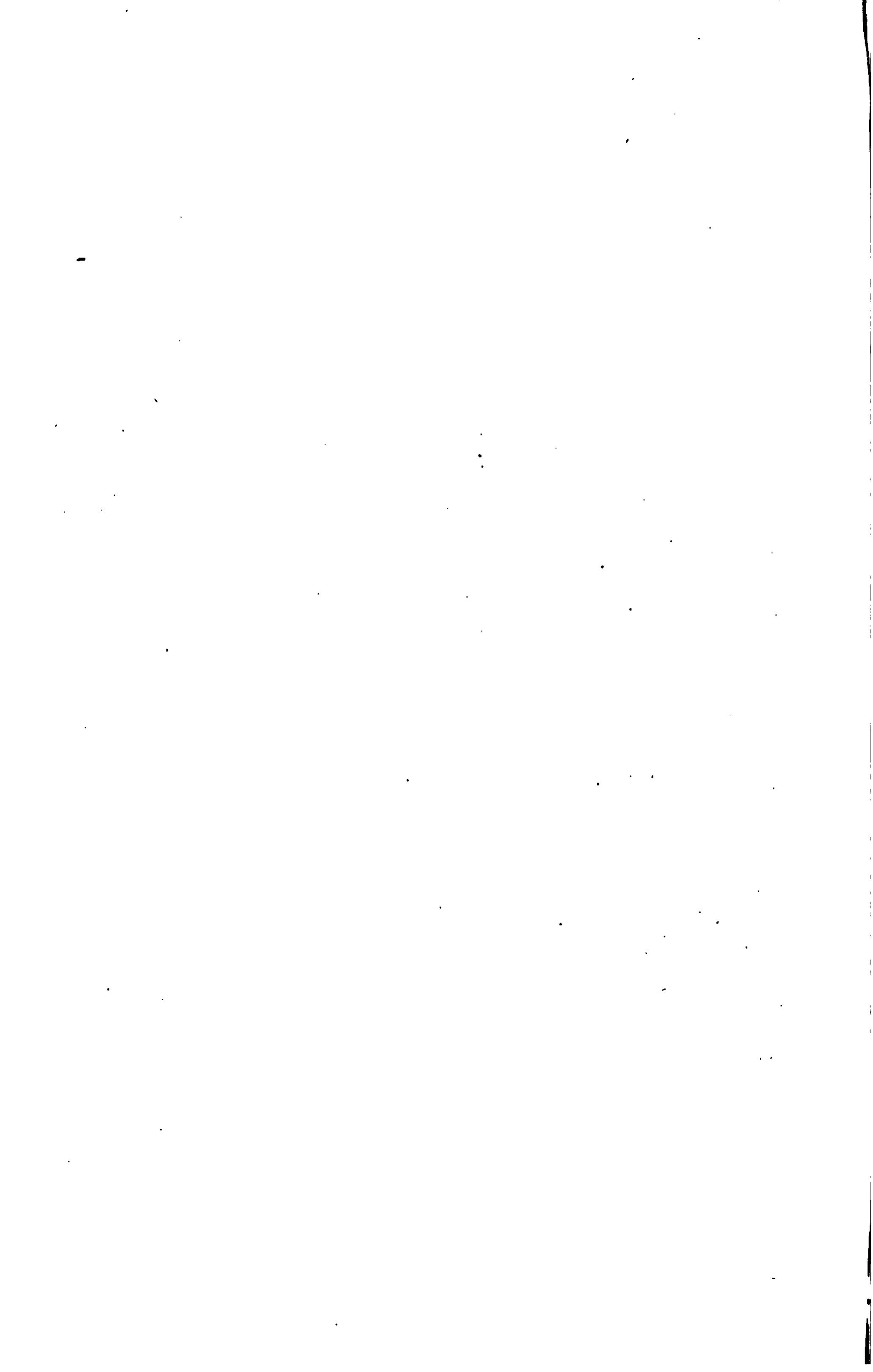




Drawn by Frank Dicksee.]

NO INTENTIONS.

"I am not the conscious kindie. How did you ever find me, Toot?"



'Not through my means, Myra. I have never mentioned you to anybody, in Fretterley or out of it. And pray, what had the Vicar to say to "Mrs. Hamilton?"'

'He asked if you were Mr. Hamilton: he has seen you riding through the village, and—'

'Don't tell me that you connected our names together before him!' interrupts Keir, with a look of anger.

'Well!—what was I to say?'

'What were you to say? You knew well enough what to say to get yourself or me out of a scrape, a few months back. But I see through your design, Myra—you want to force me to do that against which you know I am determined.'

'I cannot bear this continual separation,' she replies; 'it is killing me. I cannot live without you.'

'Listen to me, Myra,' he says, approaching closer to enforce his argument. 'You say you cannot bear this separation; but if you attempt to elude it by any devices of your own, you shall never see me again. You cannot say that I have deceived you: you threw in your lot with mine of your free consent; more than that—you urged me to the step which has brought, God knows, its retribution with it. But if you make our position public, you will do me an irremediable wrong, and injure your own cause. So I warn you!'

'Of what?'

'That suspicion has already fallen upon me for being foolish enough to visit you so openly; so much so, that I had decided, before coming here to-day, to move you as soon as possible from Fretterley; and if the rumour is not stopped by that means, I shall go away till it is forgotten.'

'Where?' she inquires, breathlessly.

'In the country, or abroad;—anywhere to baulk the gossips.'

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'And without me, Eric?'

'Without you? Of course. What good would it do if I took you with me? Why, if the least hint of such a thing were to reach my father's ears, he would ask me all about it, and I should tell him the truth. I have never told him anything but the truth,' adds the young fellow, simply; 'and I believe it would kill him.'

'And you would give me up for your father?' she says, quickly.

'A thousand times over! My father is everything in the world to me; and I can't think how I ever could have permitted myself to do that which would so much grieve him.'

A dark flush overspreads her handsome features as she hears the unpalatable truth, and her full breast heaves and her lips tremble with the deep pain it causes her. She is passing through the greatest agony a woman is capable of feeling: coming gradually, but surely, to the conviction that her reign is over, her empire overthrown—that she has lost her place in her lover's heart.

And she loves him so passionately: she has always cared for him far more than he has done for her, and his increasing coldness drives her mad.

'You said that I was everything in the world to you, three months ago,' she answers, with set teeth.

'I know I did; and at the time I believed it to be true. But I have told you, Myra, what a proud, high family mine is, and how seldom their escutcheon has been tarnished with dishonour. And—forgive me for saying so—I know it is my own fault, but I cannot help being conscious of the fact that I have tarnished it now. And my poor father thinks so much—too much of me; I feel as though I should never be able to look him in the face again.' And with that,

G

Eric Keir buries his own face in his hands.

She taps the floor impatiently with her foot.

' You are ashamed of me, Eric.'

' I am bitterly ashamed of myself, and of all that has passed between us.'

' It would have been better if we had never met.'

' Far better—both for you and for myself. Who could think otherwise?'

' It would be better, perhaps, if I were dead.'

' It would be better if we were both dead,' he exclaims bitterly; ' or had died before we saw each other. Oh, Myra—Myra! why will you wring such cruel truths from my mouth? you have been the death of all good things in me.'

He lifts his face to hers, and she is shocked to see the pain portrayed there. She is an illiterate, low-born woman, with nothing to recommend her beyond her beauty and her fierce love for him, which, yet, is like the love of an unreasoning animal, overpowering when encouraged, and apt to turn the first time it is thwarted. But she has one indomitable passion—pride, and it is stirring and working in her now.

' Would you be happy if you could undo the past?' she says in a low voice; ' if there had been no such person as me in the world, and you had never fancied that you loved me?'

' Happy!' he answers, with a sad laugh. ' I should be happy if I could wipe out the remembrance with my blood: if I could go about the world with a free conscience at the expense of everything that I possess. But come, Myra, let us talk no more of impossibilities. The past is past, my child, and nothing you or I can say will ever undo it. Let us think of the present. It is necessary you should leave Fret-

terley;—where would you like to go?'

' I don't care. You may choose for me.'

' Very well, then; I will think the matter over, and let you know. I shan't be able to come here to-morrow, as I have an engagement in the town; but the day after you may depend on seeing me. Do you want any money?'—taking out his purse.

But she shrinks from the note he offers her as though it had been a serpent.

' No—no! I am not in want of it: I have plenty to serve my need.'

' All the better for me,' he says, laughing. He has recovered his spirits again; clouds are not long in passing with the young.

' Well—good-bye,' he continues, as he takes the girl in his arms and kisses her, in a fraternal manner, on the cheek. ' It's a shame of me to have made those pretty eyes so red! Don't think twice of what I have said, Myra; you urged me on to it with your cross-questioning, and you know I lament this business for both our sakes; but the dark mood will be gone to-morrow. It's nothing unusual, after three months of honeymoon, my dear.'

She clings to him frantically close, but she says nothing.

' Why, won't you say good-bye? Then I must go without it, for I have no more time to lose.'

He is moving towards the door, when she flies after him, and almost stifles him in her embrace.

' Oh! good-bye, my love!—my darling!—my own, own, dearest love!'

She showers kisses, almost roughly on his mouth, his eyes, his brow: kisses which he accepts rather philosophically than otherwise, and from which he frees himself with a sigh of relief.

Alas! for the love of one-and-twenty, when it begins to temper its enthusiasm with philosophy!

As, with a cheerful nod, he turns out of the wicket gate, the woman stands gazing after him as though she has been turned to stone; and when he has finally disappeared, she gropes her way back to the sitting-room, and casts herself headlong on the floor.

'Gone—gone!' she moans; 'all gone, and my life gone with it! Oh! I wish that I was dead—I wish that I was buried—I wish that I could neither feel nor think—I am nothing to him now——'

She lies there for, perhaps, an hour, sobbing and moaning to herself; and is only roused by the entrance of the old woman she calls Margaret, with the preparations for her tea, and whose grunt at perceiving her attitude is half of compassion and half of contempt.

'Lord ha' mussy!' she exclaims, 'and whatever are you a lying on the boards for?'

This woman, who is clothed and kept like one of gentle birth, and by whom she is fed and paid her wages, is yet not addressed by Margaret in terms befitting a servant to use towards her mistress. The poor are ever keenest at detecting a would-be lady from a real one.

The familiar tone affronts Myra; she reads in it, not sympathy, but rebellion against her new-born dignity, and she rises and sweeps out of the room, without deigning to notice the presence of her factotum.

But the bed-room is solitary and full of sad remembrance, and in a few minutes she emerges from it, dressed for walking, and saunters in the garden.

It is a queer little nest that

Eric Keir has chosen for her, being originally intended for the game-keeper's cottage on an estate which has long since been parted with, acre by acre, and its very name sunk in the obscurity of three or four small farms; so that the cottage stands alone in the midst of wheat and barley fields; and it is through one of these, where the grain, young, and green, and tender, and not higher than a two-years' child, springs up on each side of her, that Myra, still burning as under the sense of a deep outrage, takes her way. A resolution has been growing up in her heart during the last hour which, betwixt its pride and stubbornness, it will not easily relinquish—the resolution to part with Eric Keir.

It wrenches her very soul even to think of such a thing, and as she resolves impossible ways and means for its accomplishment, her breath is hardly drawn; but she has a will of iron, and he has wounded her in her most vulnerable part. As she paces slowly up and down the narrow field-path, the jealous, angry tears scarce dried upon her cheeks, she hears a rustle in the corn behind her, and the next moment some one touches her upon the shoulder.

Myra is not chicken-hearted, but she is quick to resent an insult.

'How dare you?' she commences, angrily; but as she turns and faces the intruder, her tone is changed to one of consternation.

'Lord above!' she continues faintly. 'How did you ever find me, Joel?'

She is so taken by surprise that she has turned quite pale, and the hand she offers him is fluttering like a bird.

'Find you!' exclaims the newcomer (who, it may be as well at once to state, stands in the re-

lationship of cousin to her), 'I would have found you, Myra, if you had been at the furthest end of the whole world.'

'Aunt's not here, is she?' inquires Myra, with the quick fear that a woman in her equivocal position has of encountering the reproaches of one of her own sex; 'you're sure you're alone, Joel?'

'I'm all alone, Myra. Mother has enough to do to get her living, without coming all the way from Leicestershire to look after you. But I couldn't rest till I'd seen you: I couldn't believe what I've heard, except from your own lips. You've most broke my heart, Myra.'

'He is an uncouth, countryfied-looking fellow, without any beauty, except such as is conveyed by his love and his sorrow; but as he stands there, sheepishly enough, looking down upon the hand he still holds between his own, he commands all the respect due to the man who has done nothing for which he need blush.

His earnestness seems to touch the girl, for she is silent and hangs down her head.

'When we heard that you had left the situation in the hotel where father placed you, and without a word of warning, we couldn't credit it. But some words as the master wrote to mother made us think as all wasn't right with you; and when weeks and months went by and we didn't hear nothing, I began to fear it was true. So I travelled up from home, little by little, doing a job here and a job there, till I got to Oxford, and could speak with the master myself; and though he couldn't satisfy me as to your whereabouts, I came to it by constant inquiry, and reached Fretterley last night. And now, Myra, come home with me. I don't want to make no words about it: I don't want to

hear nothing of what you've been doing—'twould only cut me up—but say you'll come back to the old place in Leicestershire, and then I shan't think my journey's been took in vain.'

He looks her in the eyes as he concludes, and she, unable to stand his scrutiny, drops her head upon his rough velveteen shoulder, and begins to cry.

'Oh, Joel! if I could only tell you.'

'Tell me, my poor lass! where's the use of your telling me: can't I read the signs you carry about you? What's the meaning of a purple silk gown with lace fripperies upon your back, and a pair of gold drops in your ears, if it don't mean *shame*!'

'No! no! not that!' she cries, recoiling from him.

'I shall think less of you, Myra, if you call it by any other name. But the old home's open to you, my dear, all the same—open to receive and shelter you whenever you choose to come back to it, though you can't never bring the joy to it now that I once thought you would.'

The old home! How little she has thought of it of late! yet she can see it in her mind's eye, as she stands pondering his words. It was not a particularly happy home to her: the homes of the poor seldom are. She had known hunger, and thirst, and cold, and occasionally the sound of harsh words within its limits, yet the memory of the dull life she led there seems very peaceful now, compared to the excited and stormy scenes through which she has passed since leaving it.

The old home! It was not a paradise, but it was more like home to the low-born girl than daily association with a companion who is as far above her in birth as in intellect, and has grown but

too conscious of the gulf that lies between them.

Joel Cray takes her fit of musing for hesitation, and recommences his persuasion.

'I daresay *he*, whoever he may be—for I know there's a man at the bottom of all this, Myra, (curse him),' he adds *par parenthèse*—'I daresay he does all he can to persuade you that he loves you better than himself, and will be constant to you till death, but—'

'He does not,' she interrupts eagerly, in defence of the absent.

'What!' replies Joel, lost in astonishment, 'he's sick of you already! He steals you away from an honest family and an honest employment to make a—'

'Stop!' cries Myra, in a voice of authority.

'What am I to stop for?'

'You shall not call me by that name: it is a lie.'

'I wish to God you could prove it, Myra. What are you, then—*his wife*?'

'Of whom are you talking?' with passionate confusion. 'How do you know that there is any one? What right have you to come and bully me in this manner?'

'Myra! we were brought up together from little children; my mother was like your mother, and my home was your home; and long before you saw this chap, you knew that I loved you and looked to wed you when the proper time came—that's my right! And now, as we stand in God's sight together, tell me the truth. Are you married to the man, or are you not?'

At this point-blank question, she trembles, and grows red and white by turns, shrinking from the stern glance he fixes on her.

'Joel! don't look at me after that fashion, for I can't bear it!

O, Joel! you used to love me. Take me back to aunt, and the old place, and the children, for there's no one wants me here.'

'My poor lass! is it really as bad as that—only three months, and tired of you already? Well, well! you'd better have taken me, perhaps, after all—you've made a sorry bargain, Myra.'

'O, Joel! I love him—I love him beyond everything in the world. He is so clever, and so handsome, and so good to me. But I ain't fit for such as he is: I feel it at every turn. I can't talk, nor behave, nor look as he would wish me to do, and—in a lower voice—'he is *ashamed* of me, Joel.'

Poor Joel has been silently writhing under the mention of his rival's attributes, but the last clause is too much for him.

'Ashamed of you! the d—d villain! he ain't worthy to touch you. Oh, how I wish I had my fingers this moment at his wizen!'

'Hush, Joel! don't say such awful things, but—but—' with a choking sob, 'I'm nothing but a worry to him now: he wishes we had never met: he wishes I was dead, and he was rid of me.'

'Will you come home with me, or will you not?' shouts Joel, whose patience is thoroughly exhausted. 'If you stand there, Myra, a telling me any more of his insults, I swear I'll hunt him down like a dog, and set fire to every stick and stone that he possesses. Ah! you think, perhaps, that I don't know his name, and so he's safe from me; but its *'Amilton'*—there's for you—and if you disappoint me, I'll soon be upon his track.'

'O, Joel! don't be hard on me: you can't tell how I feel the parting with him.'

She turns her streaming eyes upon the cottage, whilst he, un-

able to bear the sight of her distress, paces up and down uneasily.

'Then you mean to come back with me, Myra?'

'Yes—yes—to-morrow.'

'To-morrow you'll have changed your mind.'

'What will there be to change it?' she answers, passionately. 'How can anything undo his words? He says I have been the death of all good things in him: that if it was possible he would wipe out even the memory of me with his blood; with his blood, Joel, think of that!'

'Well, them's insults, whatever they may mean, that you've no right to look over, Myra; and if you won't settle 'em, I shall.'

'You would not harm him, Joel!' fearfully.

'I'd break every bone in his body, if I'd the chance to, and grateful for it. But if you'll promise to give him up without any more to-do, and come back home with me, I'll leave him to Providence. He'll catch it in the next world, if not in this.'

'I have promised—I will do it—only give me one more night in the place where I have been so happy.'

He is not very willing to grant her this indulgence, but she exacts it from him, so that he is obliged to let her have her way, and passes the next twelve hours in a state of uninterrupted fear, lest he should appear to interpose his authority, or, after a night's reflection, she should play him false, and decide to remain where she is.

But Joel Cray need not have been afraid.

Myra spends the time indeed no less perplexedly than he does; but those who knew her innate pride and selfwill would have had no difficulty in guessing that it would come off conqueror at last.

'He would give me up a thousand times over for his *father*,' she keeps on repeating, when she finds her strength is on the point to fail; 'he said so, and he means it, and sooner or later it would be my fate. And I will not stay to be given up: I will go before he has the chance to desert me. I will not be told again that I tarnish his honour, and that we had better both be dead than I live to disgrace him.'

'I cannot bear it. I love him too much to be able to bear it. Perhaps, when he hears that I am gone, and comes to miss me (I am sure that he will miss me), he may be sorry for the cruel things he said, and travel England over till he finds me, and asks me to come back to him again.'

The soft gleam which her dark eyes assume as the thought strikes her, is soon chased away by the old sore memory.

'But he will never come; he only longs to be quit of me that he may walk with a free conscience through the world, and I am the stumbling-block in his way. O! he shall never say so again: he shall know what it is to be free: he shall never have the opportunity to say such bitter truths to me again.'

And so, with the morning light, the impetuous, unreasoning creature, without leaving sign or trace behind her to mark which way she goes, resigns herself into the hands of Joel Cray, and flies from Fretterley.

When, according to promise, Eric Keir pays another visit to the gamekeeper's cottage, there is only old Margaret to open the door and stare at him as though she had been bewitched.

'Where is your mistress?' he says, curtly: the expression of

old women's faces not possessing much interest for him.

'Lor, sir! she's gone.'

'Gone! where—into the village?'

'O! deary me! I knows nothing about it: she never spoke to me. How could I tell but what she'd left by your orders?'

'What do you mean? Has Mrs. Hamilton left Fretterley?'

'Yes, sir—I suppose so. I haven't seen nothing of her since yesterday morning.'

'Impossible!—without leaving a note or any explanation?'

'I don't know if you'll find a note amongst her things, sir! they're just as she left 'em: I haven't touched nothing; I knows my place better; and I'd rather you'd find out the truth for yourself, though I has my suspizzions, of course, which we're all liable to, rich and poor alike. But I haven't worried neither, knowing there's no call to fear but what my wages will be all right with an honourable gentleman like yourself.'

He makes no effort to restrain her cackle, but passes through the door she has thrown open in silence, and enters the deserted sitting-room. He does not know if he is awake or asleep: he feels as if he were moving in a dream.

Gone! Left him! without the intention of returning! It is impossible; she must mean to come back again: she is playing a foolish trick, in hopes of frightening him into compliance with that which she has so often asked, and he refused. But neither in bed or sitting-room can Eric Keir discover the least indication that Myra's absence is to be a temporary one; nor a written line of threatening or farewell. On the contrary, she has taken all the simplest articles of her attire with her, and left behind, strewn on the floor in proud neglect, the

richer things with which he has provided her. Weary, and utterly at a loss to account for this freak on the part of one who has appeared so entirely devoted to himself, Eric returns to the lower room, and summons old Margaret to his side.

'I can find nothing to account for Mrs. Hamilton's departure. What do you mean by having your suspicions?' he inquires in a determined voice.

'Well, sir—deary me! don't take offence at what I say; but truth is truth, and your lady didn't leave this house alone, as my own eyes is witness to.'

His face flushes, and as he puts the next question he shades it with his hand.

'Who did she leave it with, then? Speak out, woman, and don't keep me waiting here for ever!'

'O lor, sir! don't take on so, there's a dear gentleman. I can't rightly tell you, sir, never having seen the young man before; but he was hanging about here the evening you left, and talking with your lady in the field, and he fetched away her box with his own 'ands, yesterday morning, as I watched 'im from the kitchen winder. A country-looking young man he was, but not ill-favoured; and as they walked off together I see him kiss the mistress's cheek, that I did, if my tongue was to be cut out, for saying so, the very next minute.'

'There—there! that will do; go to your work, and hold your tongue, if such a thing is possible to you. You will remain on here, and when I have decided what is to be done with these things, I will let you know.'

And so saying, Eric Keir strides from the house again, mounts his horse, and retakes his way to Oxford.

'A young man, country-looking,

but not ill-favoured ; some one of the friends from whom he has alienated her, perhaps. Certainly a person of her own class, and to whom she returns in preference to himself.

' How could he have ever been such a fool as to suppose that a woman taken from her station in life, accustomed to, and probably flattered by, the attentions of clodhoppers and tradesmen, could appreciate the niceties of such a sacred thing as honour, or the affection of an elevated and intellectual mind ? '

So he says, in his first frenzy of wrath and jealousy and shame,

but so does he not entirely believe. The old woman's gossip has left a miserable doubt to rankle in his heart ; but has not accomplished the death of his trust in the girl who has left him, and whom, though he has ceased to love, he feels bound to search after, and succour and protect. He makes all the investigations that are possible without betraying his secret to the world ; but private inquiries and carefully-worded newspaper advertisements prove alike futile, and from the day on which she fled from Fretterley the fate of Myra to Eric Keir is wrapt in dark uncertainty.

(To be continued.)

IN WINTER.

OH, Robin, why dost sing ?
Are not the last poor blossoms of the rose
Sodden and dead ? and all the lilies too,
Which, like tall angel sentinels, have stood
Guarding a plot of green the summer thro' ?

Even the leaves drop down,
Writhen and brown,
As if they died in agony ; red beech,
And tawny chestnut fans, scorched by the breath
Of Autumn's burning kisses laid on each.

Oh, winter sun, why shine ?
Are not the deepest bowers laid dead and bare
Where thou wast wont to peep ? and o'er, alas !
Is all thy pretty play of hide and seek,
Among the nodding leaves and bearded grass !
Over the hoary wood
In angry mood
Thou gazest with a red and sullen eye,
Touching the barren boughs with scornful fire,
While with long-gathering moan the wind sweeps by.

Oh, violet, why bloom ?
False prophet of the spring, thou venturest forth,
Telling the heart of fitful April hours !
Scentless, thou droopest to the ice-bound earth,
A pallid ghost among the blackened flowers.
The very pool lies dead
While overhead
Gray misty snow-clouds darken all the air
And spectre birds flit noiseless thro' the sky,
Seeking their frozen nests in dumb despair.

A. L. L.

THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

‘CHARLES I.’ AT THE LYCEUM—THEATRICAL CRITICISM—THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURER—SIR BALDWYN LEIGHTON—WORKING MEN—SERMONS—THE IMPENDING SESSION—MEN AND MEASURES—THE PROFESSION OF POLITICS.

IT is now about three months ago that a play by Mr. W. G. Wills, entitled ‘Charles I.,’ was presented to the public on the boards of the Lyceum Theatre. The piece was enthusiastically received. The newspaper critics gushed over in a flood of ecstasies. The management issued leaflets epitomising the ‘Opinions of the London Press.’ The advertisements in the ‘Times’ drew our attention to this ‘noble’ and ‘beautiful’ drama, and bespoke our attention to the actor’s great delineation of the ‘Martyr King.’ The programme of the Lyceum Theatre is still unchanged, and therefore we may fairly conclude that, at all events, in a pecuniary point of view, the play is an unqualified success. In fact, ‘Charles I.,’ during the dull months of last year, became the Talk of the Town, and therefore it is my bounden duty to say a word or two about it. In the first place, then, let me congratulate the author on having written a dialogue which, from a literary stand-point, is far beyond the efforts of our popular dramatists, and which induces a hope that taste is not wholly deadened, and that there is some chance that superior acquirements and refined phraseology are not altogether lost upon the English stage. On the same boards, some three years ago, Lord Lytton’s latest dramatic production, ‘The Rightful Heir,’ seemed to promise the resurrection of a higher class of dramatic composition, and in that excellently-written and remarkably well-acted play we, the paying

play-goers, began to think that the time was coming when a visit to the theatre might really afford us an intellectual treat. Like most sublunary hopes, however, the expectation was not fulfilled, and ‘The Rightful Heir’ was gathered to his fathers, and his house left untenanted. Claimants certainly appeared, but the verdict of the public effectually deprived them of the honours to which they aspired, and the dramatic compilations had to rest content with being called a ‘piece,’ and were never honoured with the name of ‘play.’ It is full of deep significance that no author in recent years has ventured to write, and no management ventured to produce, a tragedy. Of course, I except all Shaksperian revivals; but how is it that we see nothing like ‘The Gamester,’ or ‘A New Way to Pay Old Debts?’ Even ‘The Hunchback’ still retains its superiority. Surely the dramatic giants of comparatively recent years have not vanished from the earth, like the sons of Anak! Surely, in these days of literary power and activity, there must be some intellects that are capable of treading the paths of Sheridan and Knowles. Are we to believe that dramatic genius is nurtured only in Paris, and that England is wholly incapable of bringing forth any such writers as Victorien Sardou, Barrière, and Thibourt—to say nothing of De Musset, and Octave Jeuillet? Granted that, owing to social conventionalities, the motive of these French authors is inexorably denied to us, are we to believe that we can find no

genius here at home incapable of constructing plays and writing conversations that are not based upon breaches of the seventh Commandment? Well, Mr. Wills throws down his challenge, and his admirers in the daily press require us to recognize in him a dramatic author of supereminent ability and unrivalled powers. I cannot help thinking that it was not a blush of satisfied delight that warmed Mr. Wills' cheeks when he read the fulsome comments on his play that appeared here, there, and everywhere in the London journals, after the production of 'Charles I.' He may not unnaturally have sighed over his breakfast-table, Save me from my friends! Behind the journalistic scenes as he is, it is more than possible that he must have felt that his critics were 'coming it a little too strong,' and that the drama written up for one particular actor would have found its proper place, and its just balance in the scales of merit, without the false weights of undue adulation that accompanied its first representation. As a play, it is unexceptionably feeble; it creates no interest in the mind of the spectator; it awakens no sympathy save, in the last act, for a man who is cruelly separated from his wife, and even at this point the author gives no room for displaying the anguish of the royal consort; and the climax of the drama is almost as great an anti-climax as can be well conceived. The mysterious last word of Charles spoken upon the scaffold to Bishop Juxon—*Remember*—is made by Mr. Wills to be spoken to the queen with reference to a miniature the king wears round his neck; and here, I think, the author may share with Dr. Manning's epigram upon the doctrine of Papal Infallibility the glory of having

'triumphed over history.' We are expected to believe, by the incident that brings down the curtain upon the second act, that Cromwell positively intended to murder Charles with his own hands after an interview in Whitehall! and half-a-dozen unmistakable supers in buff are palmed off upon us as the 'loyal gentlemen of the Inns of Court!' Then we have a personage in the shape of Lady Eleanor Davys, whose historical existence may possibly be vouched for by some dim record in the British Museum, who occasionally appears in the shape of a *confidante* to the queen, and utters some incomprehensible remarks upon the conjunction of Mars and Saturn, and other abstruse astrological observations, for no purpose whatever. Her appearance, at certain intervals, is not connected with the action of the drama in the most remote degree. She has not one thousandth part of the importance of Peter of Pomfret, or the Soothsayer in 'Julius Cæsar.' And the greatest blunder of a playwright is to introduce a character which has not some connection, however remote, with the story he presents in a dramatic form. Again, the villainy of Moray is but half worked out. The author seems to have had greater qualms about this business than the Scotch laird, despite his 'itching palm.' Miss Isabel Bateman's performance of the Queen is, I am delighted to admit, fascinating in the extreme; but why, O why, does she affect a French accent in some of her speeches, and not in others? She reminds us too much of Mr. Vining's shortcomings in this respect in his performance of 'Count Fosco' in the 'Woman in White'; and, for the sake of travelled ears, it would have been far better that she had not been given French

lines to speak. Her occasional broken English certainly informed us that she was meant to be French, but her French accent as certainly informed us that she was undoubtedly English. Of Mr. Belmore's 'Cromwell' I can only say that nothing but real art and extreme caution could make the part even tolerable, and Mr. Belmore's talents were never before put to so severe a test, and they have stood the trial admirably. But what a Cromwell has Mr. Wills created! Whatever may be our opinions as to the Protector's politics, and however much we may dislike the character of the man, we cannot refuse to own that he possessed genius and abilities—qualities which are altogether wanting in the truculent little snob with whom Mr. Wills has padded his play. 'Sheer dramatic necessity'—the painful plea which is urged upon the play-bill—cannot excuse the dramatist for holding up to public hatred, contempt, and ridicule, a man who, with all his faults, was immeasurably the superior of the weak-minded and miserable monarch. It is no part of my duty, even if it was my desire, to apologize for the conduct of the mighty rebel; but even the most unflinching royalist need not be ashamed to own, that while Charles may command our compassion, Cromwell deserves a dignified remembrance. I cannot help thinking that Mr. Wills has thrown away a splendid opportunity in not having made the usurper share stage honours with the king; he might then have achieved a dramatic triumph of far higher worth than is to be found in the ovations of undiscriminating theatrical reporters. Of course, it is urged, in reply to any such objection, that Mr. Wills' intention was to make Charles the all-important

figure, and that he has attained the desired result. If this be so, I own that I find some difficulty in discovering wherein consists the 'nobility' of the play. For if the play was written merely with the view of supplying a particular actor with a part, we may be pardoned if we venture to criticise the critics, and express some misgivings as to how far their adulatory epithets are justifiable. It is as great a mistake to condemn a play on account of the incompetence of the actors, as it is to pronounce it a masterpiece because it affords an opportunity for the display of histrionic genius. However, I have no desire to seem captious where all are, apparently, so well contented, and I will only say, that if Mr. Irving is indebted to Mr. Wills, the amount is more than cancelled by Mr. Wills' obligations to Mr. Irving. Of this actor's talents it is almost impossible to speak too highly. When I first saw him in 'Hunted Down,' at the St. James's Theatre, some years ago, I felt sure that he was destined to arrive at the high position he now occupies; and I have no hesitation in pronouncing him to be the ablest actor on the English stage. To watch him from the stalls is always an intellectual treat, and I hope I shall not be thought guilty of gross bad taste, when I say that his 'Digby Grand' is as superior to his 'Charles I.' as his 'Matthias' is to either—and his 'Charles I.' is admirable.

Let me add a word or two upon theatrical criticism. As one of the play-going public, I am bound to say that I often have been most painfully deceived by the notices of hero dramas that I have read in the daily journals. I have known plays puffed up to the skies by the unanimous breath of the 'critics,' which have proved to be

the most commonplace stuff, and which have soon gone out like a fire-balloon, and are seen no more. I have known other plays as unanimously condemned, which have run their hundred nights, and proved to be, to all pecuniarily concerned, a great success. Now, we outsiders are, not unnaturally, a little surprised at this, and, after some experience, we are compelled to feel some hesitation in accepting the reports we read. We all know that the Talk of the Town is apt to be censorious, and, no doubt, in certain instances, it cannot fail to be unjust. Therefore we receive with caution its gossip that 'critics' are venal, and that an eulogistic notice of a new play may be secured by a little manœuvring on the part of the author or the management, or that sharp and disagreeable reports are due to personal hostility or other unworthy motives. Such things are said, and of course we are bound to remember that critics are but men, and may possibly be swayed by influences which are not altogether legitimate. Such arguments I put on one side, and content myself with observing that it is worth considering whether the first representation of a play affords proper opportunities for fair criticism. It is tolerably well known by all those who take an interest in such matters, that those who have the government of the London theatres are not as particular as they might, and ought to be, in the matter of rehearsals. Consequently, it is not unfrequently ten days or a fortnight after the first public representation that either author or actors are fairly amenable to detailed criticism. Of course this ought not to be the case, but we must accept the facts; and the only person who really deserves criticism on the first night is the

manager. Without, then, desiring to throw too hard work upon that deserving class of public servants, the theatrical critics, I would throw out the suggestion that they should perform their duty by merely briefly recording their general impressions of a new play immediately upon its first representation, and that they should reserve their detailed remarks for a subsequent visit, when they certainly would be in a better position to give a fair and candid opinion. Besides, we may entertain some doubt as to the value of a criticism which is necessarily written hurriedly, late at night, in order to be in time for the next morning's impression.

During the 'silly season' the agricultural labourer came prominently to the fore. It is astonishing what a quantity of excellent persons are to be found whose mission in life appears to be to discover the wrongs of their humbler neighbours. Not content with parading the social shortcomings with which we are all, unfortunately, only too intimately acquainted, such persons are apt to draw upon their imaginations for the creation of future possible wrongs, and to treat them as if they actually existed. No doubt it is, in many cases, a very wise thing to prepare for the worst. If you wish for peace, prepare for war, is an ancient adage, though it is not one likely to find much favour with the present Humble Pie Administration (I thank thee, 'Pall Mall Gazette,' for teaching me that word!). But still, it is pressing the principle a little too far, if you persistently raise up in the minds of a certain class of men the idea of an injury which does not exist as yet, and may never take substantial form; for, unhappily, there are very few in-

dividuals who have to work, and work hard, for their livelihood who cannot be easily persuaded that they are unjustly used, and that they have a right to demand, in an imperative manner, that society, sometime or other, shall place them in a more luxurious position. The state of the agricultural labourer, we are gravely assured, is one of almost absolute serfdom ; and something ought to be done to give him a chance, if not of altogether equalling the territorial landlord, at least of rivalling his immediate master, the farmer who employs him. The real question, of course, is, 'What can the most eager philanthropist really do ?' This is essentially an age of competition, and everybody, according to the accidents of his birth, which no amount of social-improvement theories can possibly regulate, has his chance, such as it may be, of distancing his neighbours and compeers. The happiness of life is eminently relative; and we may be excused if we say that the ploughman on fourteen shillings a week enjoys his existence quite as much as the skilled mechanic at forty, and probably far more than the miner and collier at thirty. The blessings of health and fresh air, with field-labour and low wages, may be fairly set against close confinement, and consequent ill-health, and high remuneration. Wealth cannot be attained in these days, even in a comparative degree, without a proportionate amount of toil, and millionnaires may have to pass through a furnace of mental anxiety such as the compensated Hodge is absolutely free from. Sir Baldwyn Leighton has published an excellent little pamphlet entitled, 'The Farm Labourer in 1872,' but the argument amounts to this—that farm-labourers should be treated as

human beings, and that, instead of a high scale of wages, a bonus should be given them on the substantial proof of the excellence of their work as apparent by practical results ; that is to say, always remember that a man is a man, and let him see some tangible and substantial reason for taking an interest in his work. Pay a man so much a week to do certain work, and he will do it—after a fashion, tolerably well, no doubt, if he has reason to fear that he will be dismissed with a bad character if he is caught idling ; but he will do the same work a hundred per cent. better at less wages, if he is assured of extra payment on the excellent results of his labour. The existence of trades-unionism may be the logical outcome of the shortsightedness of employers, but it is most fatal to the advancement of individual unionists. It is based upon the utterly-false assumption that one workman is as good as another, and it is surprising that the intelligent mechanic is still so blind to the fact, that for the sake of securing a rise of a shilling or two of wages per week, he sacrifices his opportunities of asserting the worth of his capabilities above the dead-level of the incompetence of idler and inferior associates. Trades-unions, in point of fact, are organized for the sake of the least intelligent and least laborious members of the community ; and it is they, and they alone, who reap the benefits thereby. I cannot forbear quoting, at this point, Sir Baldwyn Leighton's sensible remarks : 'Up to the end of the last century, or even within fifty years past in some towns, there were associations of trades, called guilds, partaking of the nature of trades-unions, but differing from the modern aspect of trades-unionism in these important

particulars: first, they were associations of employers and employés, both working harmoniously together to their mutual advantage; secondly, the condition of fellowship in the guild was, that a workman should do his work well and truly; and thirdly, the workman took some share of the profits of the trade. The objects of modern unionism, on the contrary, seem to be to array employer and employed against each other, thereby causing enormous waste and loss to them chiefly, and to the world at large indirectly, instead of all sharing the profits of increased demand; and, furthermore, to encourage bad work for what is erroneously called the good of trade. You cannot compare an old house, or an old piece of furniture, or even an old brick, with its modern substitute, without perceiving what we have lost in good workmanship, which means Truth and Honesty, and something more than mechanical skill.'

One word to those miry demagogues who are perpetually declaiming about the 'working man,' describing him as the bone and sinew of England, and so forth. Are there no 'working men' besides those who, for a certain number of hours out of the twenty-four, are exercising their muscles in manual labour? Does no one 'work' except the artizan and labourer? Are there not in our great cities, thousands of 'working men' whose mental toil is protracted long after the hardy son of the soil is fast asleep and snoring? Where would the 'working man' be if the brains of his employer were not perpetually at work, devising new schemes and planning channels which the 'working man' must dig? Is not the toil of the physician, the lawyer, the clergyman

—and few realize how hard the English clergy are worked—the statesman, the literary man, fully deserving of the name of 'work'? Go farther; take the great landlord with his thousands of acres, has he no responsibilities, no cares? Ah! my good Radical friend, 'nationalise' the land—fulfil your dream of universal equality, give everybody five hundred a year, and go mad in wondering what you are to do with society then!

Perhaps we ought to congratulate ourselves that during the 'silly season' above mentioned we were spared the usual letters in the 'Times' on the subject of long sermons. Afflicted laymen have generally found an outlet at that season for the exasperation which they have long pent up at being compelled on Sundays to listen to at least one essay composed of highly-watered theological milk. With these complainants I have the deepest sympathy, but I have always felt that their complaints were not sincere, for the remedy lay so obviously in their own hands. Nobody is bound to remain in church to listen to a sermon, if he would rather not; and it is much to be regretted that arrangements are not made whereby the services and sermons may be made independent of each other. I have often tried to find out whence comes that extraordinary passion for sermons that seems inseparable from the nature of our countrymen. Poor people in a country parish think nothing at all of the parson if he does not give them two long discourses per Sunday. I find it impossible to believe that such people take in one-tenth part of what is said to them, and yet they would be very much annoyed if they did not, at all events, get the chance of comprehending the

other nine-tenths. Happy folk, that evidently are not critical, unless some aggrieved parishioner shrieks that popery is preached in the parish pulpit, and then the rustic orthodoxy stands stoutly on its guard. Now, it is no disrespect to the clergy of the Established Church to say that, as a rule, they are but indifferent preachers; they are perfectly aware of the fact, and frequently own it with sincere regret. The fault, in my opinion, rests not so much with them as with the ecclesiastical system which is so outrageously conservative of worn-out traditions—traditions of practice, I mean, not of doctrine; that it is no business of mine to touch upon in these pages, remembering the lines of Pope:

'Nay, fly to altars, there they'll talk
you dead,
For fools rush in where angels fear
to tread!'

It is no easy task to write a theological essay once or twice every week that will take half an hour to deliver, and at the same time be quite worth listening to. The clergy of the English Church are allowed to run wildly—or tamely, as the case may be—in the pulpit the moment they are ordained deacons, wholly irrespective of their individual capacities, and entirely regardless of their knowledge of the infinite workings of the human heart and mind, without which no one can hope to be a really great preacher. Bishops would confer a signal favour upon the long-suffering laity, if they would refuse to admit the young clergy to preach until they had served their office for some time, and were in a position to lecture people older, and sometimes wiser, than themselves. The universities would none the less deserve our gratitude if they

would establish schools of elocution, and give the public orator some private work to do. It is astonishing that, considering how much preaching is thought of amongst us, no substantial effort is made towards improving the delivery of sermons. We all know how a good preacher can rivet the attention of his congregation, but why should this be left entirely to natural gifts? For if only natural qualities can confer a fluent eloquence, the clergyman who delivers a written essay might, at all events, be taught how to compose English words, and how to read them clearly and emphatically. If something of this kind is not done soon, we, the hitherto patient hearers, shall be compelled, in self-defence, to retire politely at the conclusion of divine worship, and leave the preacher to exhort the empty pews.

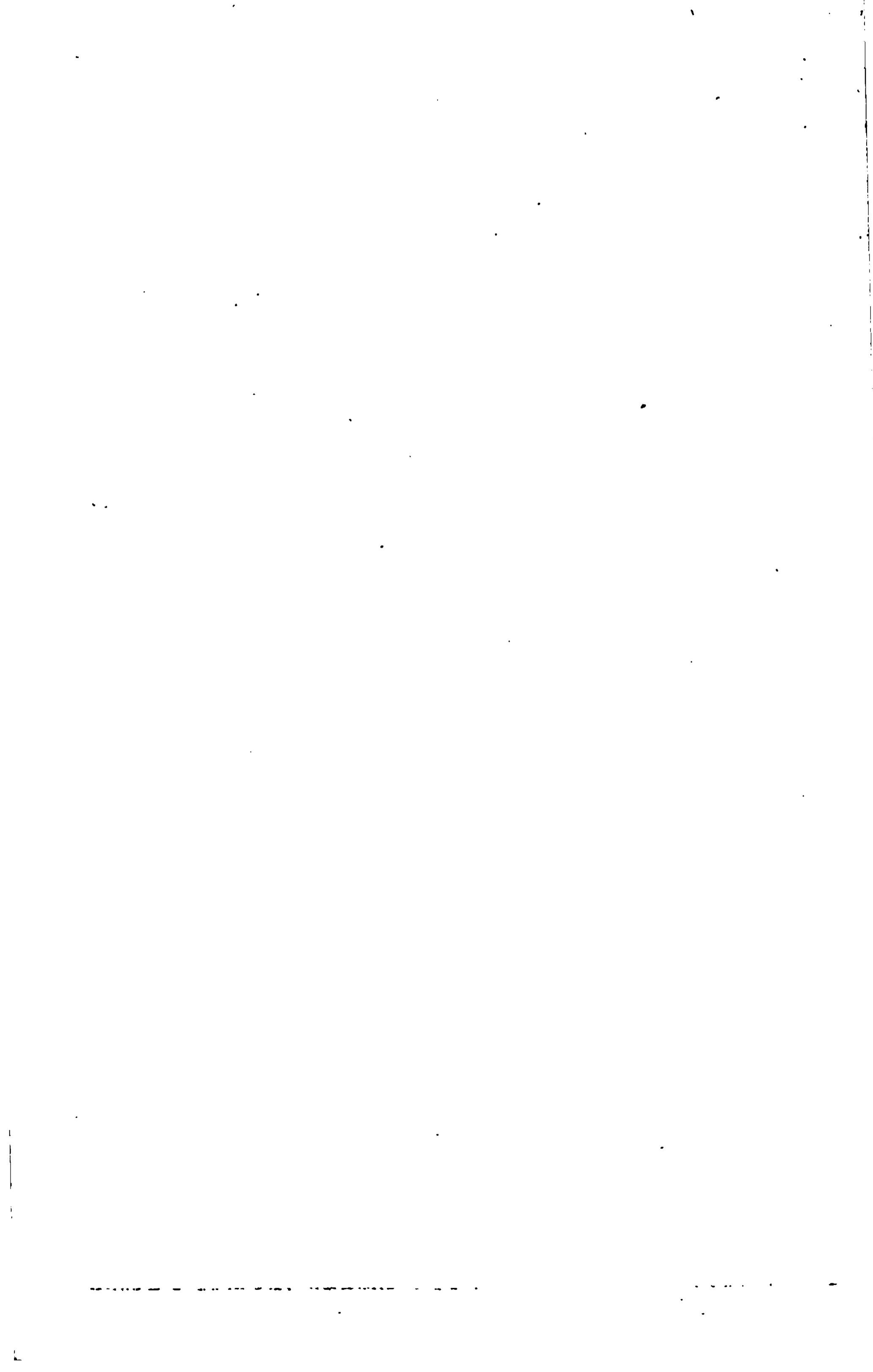
The time for the reassembling of British senators is now not very far off, and for the divisions in the Liberal camp there are great searchings of heart. It does not need ripened age, or curious acquaintance with the journalism of the last generation, to be aware that politics, as such, do not command, among the vast majority of citizens, the same anxious consideration as in the days of yore. The reflective portion of educated society does not care to range itself blindly and unconditionally upon the side of any political party in the state. We have learned that there is a good deal to be said for the peculiarities of each, and we see pretty clearly that all parties are tending to extremes which the well-regulated mind of a sober man is anxious to avoid. We cannot go so far as to hope that there is any immediate prospect of the formation of a common-sense party such as

Mr. Tennyson vaguely foreshadowed in a line or two of 'Locksley Hall,' because we are tacitly aware that each individual of us has his mad points which forbid the coalition of plain and practical wisdom; and we know that genius, which is so irrepressible, and *must* rear its head above the surface, as far as regards the golden mean, is invariably more or less insane. Still, we are beginning to ask ourselves what is the advantage of pinning our unhesitating faith on any one man, and whether it is not rather a sign of unintentional dishonesty, or intellectual weakness, when a hustings candidate declares himself prepared to follow Mr. So-and-so, the Minister, through thick and thin. Through slow and painful experiences, we are steadily acquiring the conviction that men must be judged by their measures, and that temporary political success is not always a sure gauge of true political capacity. The profession of politics is not what it was; and while we may congratulate ourselves upon having nearly got rid of the clever adventurer, we may well ask ourselves whether we are satisfied with a parliament composed, to a very considerable extent, of men whose chief qualification for their high and responsible position is their wealth. Can any one doubt but that there are hundreds of men living now in quiet obscurity who are far more fitted for the performance of legislative functions than the vast majority of those in whose hands are now placed the honour and the interest of the British Empire? And is it not further a matter for regret that such men are contented with their humbler spheres; and, if they were ever so uneasy, and

hungered with never so great ambition, they simply could not afford to be Members of Parliament? It is not merely the cost of an election that keeps such men in the background, and permits them only to criticise the acts of the government through the medium of the daily press; but it is the knowledge that if you have once attained the position of being able to write M.P. after your name, you are expected, in one way or another, to pay for the privilege by a considerably increased expenditure every year. Whether the Ballot Bill has really lessened election expenditure, legitimate and illegitimate, is a question that cannot be answered yet, though we may entertain the hope that that, combined with the Corrupt Practices Act, has rendered for ever impossible the charges, which once were counted by thousands, that attended the admission into the Commons House at Westminster. We know, as a fact, that a Member of Parliament must have something more than a merely modest competence at his command. Hitherto, Reform Bills have only had regard to the free and independent electors—would it be too much to ask that their representatives should be accorded some further degree of enfranchisement? Till this is done, the candidate has no chance of possessing the same degree of freedom as the elector.

At this traditionally joyous season of the year, however, I take off my hat and say to all the members of the Government—especially to my esteemed friend, Mr. Ayrton—A happy new year! with the addition of a wish that they may get it.

FREE LANCE.



Drawn by R. Newcombe.]

[Frontispiece.

"MY VALENTINE."





LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1873.

A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

BY CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

CHAPTER X.

I SUSPECT Dr. Staines merely meant to say that she had concealed from him an alarming symptom for several weeks; but she answered in a hurry, to excuse herself, and let the cat out of the bag—excuse my vulgarity.

‘It was all that Mrs. Vivian’s fault. She laughed at me so for not wearing them: and she has a waist you can span—the wretch!’

‘Oh, then, you have been wearing stays clandestinely?’

‘Why, you know I have. Oh, what a stupid! I have let it all out.’

‘How could you do it, when you knew, by experience, it is your death?’

‘But it looks so beautiful, a tiny waist.’

‘It looks as hideous as a Chinese foot, and, to the eye of science, far more disgusting; it is the cause of so many unlovely diseases.’

‘Just tell me one thing; have you looked at Mrs. Vivian?’

‘Minutely. I look at all your friends—with great anxiety, knowing no animal more dangerous

than a fool. Vivian—a skinny woman, with a pretty face, lovely hair, good teeth, dying eyes—’

‘Yes, lovely!’

‘A sure proof of a disordered stomach—and a waist pinched in so unnaturally, that I said to myself, “Where on earth does this idiot put her liver?” Did you ever read of the frog who burst, trying to swell to an ox? Well, here is the rivalry reversed; Mrs. Vivian is a bag of bones in a balloon; she can machine herself into a wasp; but a fine young woman like you, with flesh and muscle, must kill yourself three or four times before you can make your body as meagre, hideous, angular, and unnatural as Vivian’s. But all you ladies are monomaniacs; one might as well offer the truth to a gorilla. It brought you to the edge of the grave. I saved you. Yet you could go and—God grant me patience! So I suppose these unprincipled women lent you their stays, to deceive your husband?’

‘No. But they laughed at me so that—Oh, Christie, I’m a

wretch; I kept a pair at the Lucas', and a pair at Madame Cie's, and I put them on now and then.'

'But you never appeared here in them.'

'What, before my tyrant? Oh, no, I dared not.'

'So you took them off before you came home.'

Rosa hung her head, and said 'Yes,' in a reluctant whisper.

'You spent your daylight dressing. You dressed to go out; dressed again in stays; dressed again without them; and all to deceive your husband, and kill yourself, at the bidding of two shallow, heartless women, who would dance over your grave without a pang of remorse, or sentiment of any kind, since they live, like midges, *only to dance in the sun, and suck some worker's blood.*'

'Oh, Christie! I'm so easily led. I am too great a fool to live. Kill me!'

And she kneeled down, and renewed the request, looking up in his face with an expression that might have disarmed Cain *ipsum.*

He smiled superior. 'The question is, are you sorry you have been so naughty?'

'Yes, dear. Oh! oh!'

'Will you be very good, to make up?'

'Oh, yes. Only tell me how: for it does not come natural to poor me.'

'Keep out of those women's way for the rest of the season.'

'I will.'

'Bring your stays home, and allow me to do what I like with them.'

'Of course. Cut them in a million pieces.'

'Till you are recovered, you must be my patient, and go nowhere without me.'

'That is no punishment, I am sure.'

'Punishment! Am I the man to punish you? I only want to save you.'

'Well, darling, it won't be the first time.'

'No; but I do hope it will be the last.'

CHAPTER XI.

'Sublatā causā tollitur effectus.' The stays being gone, and dissipation moderated, Mrs. Staines bloomed again, and they gave one or two unpretending little dinners at the Bijou. Dr. Staines admitted no false friends to these. They never went beyond eight; five gentlemen, three ladies. By this arrangement the terrible discursiveness of the fair, and man's cruel disposition to work a subject threadbare, were controlled and modified, and a happy balance of conversation established. Lady Cicely Treherne was always invited, and always managed to come; for she said, 'They were the most agreeable little parties in London, and the host and hostess both so interesting.' In the autumn, Staines worked double tides with the pen, and found a vehicle for medical narratives in a weekly magazine that did not profess medicine.

This new vein put him in heart. His fees, towards the end of the year, were less than last year, because there was no hundred-guinea fee; but there was a marked increase in the small fees, and the unflagging pen had actually earned him 200*l.*, or nearly. So he was in good spirits.

Not so Mrs. Staines; for some time she had been uneasy, fretful, and like a person with a weight on her mind.

One Sunday she said to him,

'Oh dear, I do feel so dull. Nobody to go to church with me, nor yet to the Zoo.'

'I'll go with you,' said Staines.

'You will? To which?'

'To both: in for a penny, in for a pound.'

So to church they went; and Staines, whose motto was 'Hoc agere,' minded his book. Rosa had some intervals of attention to the words, but found plenty of time to study the costumes.

During the Litany, in bustled Clara, the housemaid, with a white jacket on so like her mistress's, that Rosa clutched her own convulsively, to see whether she had not been skinned of it by some devilish sleight of hand.

No, it was on her back; but Clara's was identical.

In her excitement, Rosa pinched Staines, and with her nose, that went like a water-wagtail, pointed out the malefactor. Then she whispered, 'Look! How dare she? My very jacket! Earrings too, and brooches, and dresses her hair like mine.'

'Well, never mind,' whispered Staines. Sunday is her day. We have got all the week to shine. There, don't look at her. "From all evil speaking, lying, and slandering—"

'I can't keep my eyes off her.'

'Attend to the Litany. Do you know this is really a beautiful composition?'

'I'd rather do the work fifty times over myself.'

'Hush! people will hear you.'

When they walked home, after church, Staines tried to divert her from the consideration of her wrongs; but no—all other topics were too flat by comparison.

She mourned the hard fate of mistresses—unfortunate creatures that could not do without servants.

'Is not that a confession that servants are good, useful creatures,

with all their faults? Then, as to the mania for dress, why, that is not confined to them. It is the mania of the sex. Are you free from it?'

'No, of course not. But I am a lady, if you please.'

'Then she is your intellectual inferior, and more excusable. Any way, it is wise to connive at a thing we can't help.'

'What, keep her, after this? no, never.'

'My dear, pray do not send her away, for she is tidy in the house, and quick, and better than anyone we have had this last six months; and you know you have tried a great number.'

'To hear you speak, one would think it was my fault that we have so many bad servants.'

'I never said it was your fault; but I think, dearest, a little more forbearance in trifles—'

'Trifles! trifles—for a mistress and maid to be seen dressed alike in the same church? You take the servant's part against me, that you do.'

'You should not say that, even in jest. Come now, do you really think a jacket like yours can make the servant look like you, or detract from your grace and beauty? There is a very simple way: put your jacket by for a future occasion, and wear something else in its stead at church.'

'A nice thing, indeed, to give in to these creatures. I won't do it.'

'Why won't you, this once?'

'Because I won't—there!'

'That is unanswerable,' said he.

Mrs. Staines said that; but, when it came to acting, she deferred to her husband's wish; she resigned her intention of sending for Clara and giving her warning; on the contrary, when Clara let her in, and the white jackets rubbed together in the narrow

passage, she actually said nothing, but stalked to her own room, and tore her jacket off, and flung it on the floor.

Unfortunately, she was so long dressing for the Zoo, that Clara came in to arrange the room. She picks up the white jacket, takes it in both hands, gives it a flap, and proceeds to hang it up in the wardrobe.

Then the great feminine heart burst its bounds.

'You can leave that alone. I shall not wear that again.'

Thereupon ensued an uneven encounter, Clara being one of those of whom the Scripture says, 'the poison of asps is under their tongues.'

'La, ma'am,' said she, 'why, taint so very dirty.'

'No; but it is too common.'

'Oh, because I've got one like it. Ay. Missises can't abide a good-looking servant, nor to see 'em dressed becoming.'

'Mistresses do not like servants to forget their place, nor wear what does not become their situation.'

'My situation! Why, I can pay my way, go where I will. I don't tremble at the tradesmen's knock, as some do.'

'Leave the room! Leave it this moment.'

'Leave the room, yes—and I'll leave the house too, and tell all the 'neighbours what I know about it.'

She flounced out, and slammed the door, and Rosa sat down trembling.

Clara rushed to the kitchen, and there told the cook and Andrew Pearman how she had given it the mistress, and every word she had said to her, with a good many more she had not.

The cook laughed, and encouraged her.

But Andrew Pearman was

wroth, and said, 'You to affront our mistress like that! Why, if I had heard you, I'd have twisted your neck for ye.'

'It would take a better man than you to do that. You mind your own business. Stick to your one-horse chay.'

'Well, I'm not above my place, for that matter. But you gals must always be aping your betters.'

'I have got a proper pride, that is all, and you haven't. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to do two men's work; drive a brougham and wait on a horse, and then come in and wait at table. You are a tea-kettle groom, that is what you are. Why, my brother was coachman to Lord FitzJames, and gave his lordship notice the first time he had to drive the children. Says he, "I don't object to the children, my lord, but with her ladyship in the carriage." It's such servants as you as spoil places. No servant as knows what's due to a servant ought to know you. They'd scorn your 'quaintance, as I do, Mr. Pearman.'

'You're a stuck-up hussey, and a soldier's jade,' roared Andrew.

'And you are a low tea-kettle groom.'

This expression wounded the great equestrian soul to the quick; the rest of Sunday he pondered on it. The next morning he drove the Doctor, as usual, but with a heavy heart.

Meantime, the cook made haste and told the baker Pearman had 'got it hot' from the housemaid, and she had called him a tea-kettle groom; and in less than half an hour after that it was in every stable in the mews. Why, as Pearman was taking the horse out of the brougham, didn't two little red-headed urchins call out, 'Here, come and see the tea-kettle.

groom?" and at night some mischievous boy chalked on the black door of the stable a large white tea-kettle, and next morning a drunken, idle fellow, with a clay pipe in his mouth, and a dirty pair of corduroy trousers, no coat, but a shirt very open at the chest, showing inflamed skin, the effect of drink, inspected that work of art with blinking eyes and vacillating toes, and said, "This comes of a chap doing too much. A few more like you, and work would be scarce. A fine thing for gentlefolks to make one man fill two places! but it ain't the gentlefolk's fault, it's the man as humours 'em."

Pearman was a peaceable man, and made no reply, but went on with his work, only during the day he told his master that he should be obliged to him if he would fill his situation as soon as convenient.

The master inquired the cause, and the man told him, and said the mews was too hot for him.

The Doctor offered him five pounds a year more, knowing he had a treasure; but Pearman said, with sadness and firmness, that he had made up his mind to go, and go he would.

The Doctor's heart fairly sank at the prospect of losing the one creature he could depend upon.

Next Sunday evening Clara was out, and fell in with friends, to whom she exaggerated her grievance.

Then they worked her up to fury, after the manner of servants' friends. She came home, packed her box, brought it down, and then flounced into the room to Doctor and Mrs. Staines, and said, "I shan't sleep another night in this house."

Rosa was about to speak, but Dr. Staines forbade her: he said, "You had better think twice of

that. You are a good servant, though for once you have been betrayed into speaking disrespectfully. Why forfeit your character, and three weeks' wages?"

"I don't care for my wages. I won't stay in such a house as this."

"Come, you must not be impertinent."

"I don't mean to, sir," said she, lowering her voice suddenly; then, raising it as suddenly, "There are my keys, ma'am, and you can search my box."

"Mrs. Staines will not search your box; and you will retire at once to your own part of the house."

"I'll go farther than that," said she, and soon after the street door was slammed; the Bijou shook.

At six o'clock next morning, she came for her box. It had been put away for safety. Pearman told her she must wait till the doctor came down. She did not wait, but went, at eleven A.M., to a police-magistrate, and took out a summons against Dr. Staines, for detaining a box containing certain articles specified—value under fifteen pounds.

When Dr. Staines heard she had been for her box, but left no address, he sent Pearman to hunt for her. He could not find her. She avoided the house, but sent a woman for her diurnal love-letters. Dr. Staines sent the woman back to fetch her. She came, received her box, her letters, and the balance of her wages, which was small, for Staines deducted the three weeks' wages.

Two days afterwards, to his surprise, the summons was served.

Out of respect for a court of justice, however humble, Dr. Staines attended next Monday, to meet the summons.

The magistrate was an elderly man, with a face shaped like a

hog's, but much richer in colour, being purple and pimply: so foul a visage Staines had rarely seen, even in the lowest class of the community.

Clara swore that her box had been opened, and certain things stolen out of it; and that she had been refused the box next morning.

Staines swore that he had never opened the box, and that, if any one else had, it was with her consent, for she had left the keys for that purpose. He bade the magistrate observe that, if a servant went away like this, and left no address, she put it out of the master's power to send her box after her: and he proved he had some trouble to force her box on her.

The pig-faced beak showed a manifest leaning towards the servant; but there wasn't a leg to stand on; and he did not believe, nor was it credible, that anything had been stolen out of her box.

At this moment, Pearman, sent by Rosa, entered the court with an old gown of Clara's that had been discovered in the scullery, and a scribbling-book of the Doctor's, which Clara had appropriated, and written amorous verses in, very superior—in number—to those that have come down to us from Anacreon.

'Hand me those,' said the pig-faced beak.

'What are they, Dr. Staines?'

'I really don't know. I must ask my servant.'

'Why, more things of mine that have been detained,' said Clara.

'Some things that have been found since she left,' said Staines.

'Oh! those that hide know where to find.'

'Young woman,' said Staines, 'do not insult those whose bread you have eaten, and who have given you many presents, beside your wages. Since you are so ready

to accuse people of stealing, permit me to say that this book is mine, and not yours: and yet, you see, it is sent after you because you have written your trash in it.'

The purple, pig-faced beak went instantly out of the record, and wasted a deal of time reading Clara's poetry, and trying to be witty. He raised the question whose book this was. The girl swore it was given her by a lady who was now in Rome. Staines swore he bought it of a certain stationer, and, happening to have his pass-book in his pocket, produced an entry corresponding with the date of the book.

The pig-faced beak said that the Doctor's was an improbable story, and that the gown and the book were quite enough to justify the summons. Verdict, one guinea costs.

'What, because two things she never demanded have been found and sent after her? This is monstrous. I shall appeal to your superiors.'

'If you are impertinent, I'll fine you five pounds.'

'Very well, sir. Now hear me: if this is an honest judgment, I pray God I may be dead before the year's out; and, if it isn't, I pray God you may be.'

Then the pig-faced beak fired up, and threatened to fine him for blaspheming.

He deigned no reply, but paid the guinea, and Clara swept out of the court, with a train a yard long, and leaning on the arm of a scarlet soldier; who avenged Dr. Staines with military promptitude.

Christopher went home raging internally, for hitherto he had never seen so gross a case of injustice.

One of his humble patients followed him, and said, 'I wish I had known, sir; you shouldn't have come here to be insulted.'

Why no gentleman can ever get justice against a servant girl when *he* is sitting. It is notorious, and that makes these hussies so bold. I've seen that jade here with the same story twice afore.'

Staines reached home more discomposed than he could have himself believed. The reason was that barefaced injustice in a court of justice shook his whole faith in man. He opened the street door with his latch-key, and found two men standing in the passage. He inquired what they wanted.

'Well, sir,' said one of them, civilly enough, 'we only want our due.'

'For what?'

'For goods delivered at this house, sir. Balance of account.' And he handed him a butcher's bill, 88*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.*

'You must be mistaken: we run no bills here. We pay ready money for everything.'

'Well, sir,' said the butcher, 'there have been payments; but the balance has always been gaining; and we have been put off so often, we determined to see the master. Show you the books, sir, and welcome.'

'This instant, if you please.' He took the butcher's address, who then retired, and the other tradesman, a grocer, told him a similar tale; balance, sixty pounds odd.

He went to the butcher's, sick at heart, inspected the books, and saw that, right or wrong, they were incontrovertible; that debt had been gaining slowly, but surely, almost from the time he confided the accounts to his wife. She had kept faith with him about five weeks, no more.

The grocer's books told a similar tale.

The debtor put his hand to his heart, and stood a moment. The very grocer pitied him, and said, 'There's no hurry, Doctor; a trifle

on account, if settlement in full not convenient just now. I see you have been kept in the dark.'

'No, no,' said Christopher; 'I'll pay every shilling.' He gave one gulp, and hurried away.

At the fishmonger's, the same story, only for a smaller amount.

A bill of nineteen pounds at the very pastrycook's; a place she had promised him, as her physician, never to enter.

At the draper's, thirty-seven pounds odd.

In short, wherever she had dealt, the same system; partial payments, and ever-growing debt.

Remembering Madame Cie, he drove in a cab to Regent Street, and asked for Mrs. Staines's account.

'Shall I send it, sir?'

'No; I will take it with me.'

'Miss Edwards, make out Mrs. Staines's account, if you please.'

Miss Edwards was a good while making it out; but it was ready at last. He thrust it into his pocket, without daring to look at it there: but he went into Verrey's, asked for a cup of coffee, and perused the document.

The principal items were as follows:—

	£ s.
May 4.—Re-shaping and repairing elegant lace mantle . . .	1 8
Chip bonnet, feather and flowers	4 4
May 20.—Making and trimming blue silk dress—material part found	19 19
Five yards rich blue silk to match	4 2
June 1.—Polonaise and jacket trimmed with lace—material part found	17 17
June 8.—One black silk dress, handsomely trimmed with jet guipure and lace	49 18

A few shreds and fragments of finery bought at odd times, swelled the bill to 99*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*—not to terrify the female mind with three figures.

And let no unsophisticated young lady imagine that the trimmings, which constituted three-fourths of this bill were worth anything. The word 'lace,' in Madame Cie's bills, invariably meant machine-made trash, worth 10d. a yard, but charged 18s. a yard, for one pennyworth of work in putting it on. Where real lace was used, Madame Cie always *let her customers know it*. Miss Lucas's bill for this year contained the two following little items:—

	£ s.
Rich gros de cecile polonaise and jacket to match, trimmed with Chantilly lace and valenciennes	68 5
Superb robe de chambre, richly trimmed with skunk fur . .	40 0

The customer found the stuff, viz., two shawls; Carolina found the nasty little polecats, and got 24s. for them; Madame Cie found *the rest*.

But Christopher Staines had not Miss Lucas's bill to compare his wife's with. He could only compare the latter with their income, and with male notions of common sense and reason.

He went home, and into his studio, and sat down on his hard beech chair; he looked round on his books and his work, and then, for the first time, remembered how long and how patiently he had toiled for every hundred pounds he had made: and he laid the evidences of his wife's profusion and deceit by the side of those signs of painful industry and self-denial, and his soul filled with bitterness. 'Deceit! Deceit!'

Mrs. Staines heard he was in the house, and came to know about the trial. She came hurriedly in, and caught him with his head on the table, in an attitude of prostration, quite new to him: he raised his head directly he heard her, and revealed a face, pale, stern, and wretched.

'Oh! what is the matter now?' said she.

'The matter is what it has always been, if I could only have seen it. You have deceived me, and disgraced yourself. Look at those bills.'

'What bills?—oh!'

'You have had an allowance for housekeeping.'

'It wasn't enough.'

'It was plenty, if you had kept faith with me, and paid ready money. It was enough for the first five weeks. I am housekeeper now, and I shall allow myself two pounds a week less, and not owe a shilling either.'

'Well, all I know is, I couldn't do it: no woman could.'

'Then you should have come to me and said so; and I would have shown you how. Was I in Egypt, or at the North Pole, that you could not find me, to treat me like a friend? You have ruined us: these debts will sweep away the last shilling of our little capital; but it isn't that, oh no; it is the miserable deceit.'

Rosa's eye caught the sum total of Madame Cie's bill, and she turned pale. 'Oh, what a cheat that woman is!'

But she turned paler when Christopher said, 'That is the one honest bill; for I gave you leave. It is these that part us: these; these. Look at them, false heart! There, go and pack up your things. We can live here no longer; we are ruined. I must send you back to your father.'

'I thought you would, sooner or later,' said Mrs. Staines, panting, trembling, but showing a little fight. 'He told you I wasn't fit to be a poor man's wife.'

'An honest man's wife, you mean: that is what you are not fit for. You will go home to your father, and I shall go into some humble lodging to work for you.'

I'll contrive to keep you, and find you a hundred a year to spend in dress, the only thing your heart can really love. But I won't have an enemy here in the disguise of a friend, and I won't have a wife about me I must treat like a servant, and watch like a traitor.'

The words were harsh, but the agony with which they were spoken distinguished them from vulgar vituperation.

They overpowered poor Rosa; she had been ailing a little some time, and from remorse and terror, coupled with other causes, nature gave way. Her lips turned white, she gasped inarticulately, and, with a little piteous moan, tottered, and swooned dead away.

He was walking wildly about, ready to tear his hair, when she tottered; he saw her just in time to save her, and laid her gently on the floor, and kneeled over her.

Away went anger and every other feeling but love and pity for the poor weak creature that, with all her faults, was so lovable and so loved.

He applied no remedies at first; he knew they were useless and unnecessary; he laid her head quite low, and opened door and window, and loosened all her dress, sighing deeply all the time at her condition.

While he was thus employed, suddenly a strange cry broke from him; a cry of horror, remorse, joy, tenderness, all combined; a cry compared with which, language is inarticulate. His swift and practical eye had made a discovery.

He kneeled over her, with his eyes dilating and his hands clasped, a picture of love and tender remorse.

She stirred.

Then he made haste and applied his remedies, and brought her slowly back to life: he lifted her

up and carried her in his arms quite away from the bills and things, that when she came to, she might see nothing to revive her distress: he carried her to the drawing-room, and kneeled down and rocked her in his arms, and pressed her again and again gently to his heart, and cried over her. 'Oh, my dove, my dove! the tender creature God gave me to love and cherish, and have I used it harshly? If I had only known! if I had only known!'

While he was thus bemoaning her, and blaming himself, and crying over her like the rain—he, whom she had never seen shed a tear before in all his troubles—she was coming to entirely, and her quick ears caught his words, and she opened her lovely eyes on him.

'I forgive you, dear,' she said, feebly. 'BUT I HOPE YOU WILL BE A KINDER FATHER THAN A HUSBAND.'

These quiet words, spoken with rare gravity and softness, went through the great heart like a knife.

He gave a sort of shiver, but said not a word.

But that night he made a solemn vow to God that no harsh word from his lips should ever again strike a being so weak, so loving, and so beyond his comprehension. Why look for courage and candour in a creature so timid and shy, she could not even tell her husband *that* until, with her subtle sense, she saw he had discovered it.

CHAPTER XII.

To be a father; to have an image of his darling Rosa, and a fruit of their love to live and work for: this gave the sore heart a heavenly glow, and elasticity to

bear. Should this dear object be born to an inheritance of debt, of poverty? Never.

He began to act as if he was even now a father. He entreated Rosa not to trouble or vex herself; he would look into their finances, and set all straight.

He paid all the bills, and put by a quarter's rent and taxes. Then there remained of his little capital just 10*l.*

He went to his printers, and had a thousand order-cheques printed. These forms ran thus:—

'Dr. Staines, of 13, Dear Street, Mayfair (blank for date), orders of (blank here for tradesman and goods ordered), for cash. Received same time (blank for tradesman's receipt). Notice; Dr. Staines disowns all orders not printed on this form, and paid for at date of order.'

He exhibited these forms, and warned all the tradespeople, before a witness, whom he took round for that purpose.

He paid off Pearman on the spot. Pearman had met Clara, dressed like a pauper, her soldier having emptied her box to the very dregs, and he now offered to stay. But it was too late.

Staines told the cook Mrs. Staines was in delicate health, and must not be troubled with anything. She must come to him for all orders.

'Yes, sir,' said she. But she no sooner comprehended the cheque system fully than she gave warning. It put a stop to her wholesale pilfering. Her cooks had made full 100*l.* out of Rosa amongst them since she began to keep accounts.

Under the male housekeeper every article was weighed on delivery, and this soon revealed that the butcher and the fishmonger had habitually delivered short weight from the first, besides

putting down the same thing twice. The things were sent back that moment, with a printed form, stating the nature and extent of the fraud.

The washerwoman, who had been pilfering wholesale so long as Mrs. Staines and her sloppy-headed maids counted the linen, and then forgot it, was brought up with a run, by triplicate forms, and by Staines counting the things before two witnesses, and compelling the washerwoman to count them as well, and verify or dispute on the spot. The laundress gave warning—a plain confession that stealing had been part of her trade.

He kept the house well for 3*l.* a week, exclusive of coals, candles, and wine. His wife had had 5*l.*, and whatever she asked for dinner parties, yet found it not half enough upon her method.

He kept no coachman. If he visited a patient, a man in the yard drove him at a shilling per hour.

By these means, and by working like a galley slave, he dragged his expenditure down almost to a level with his income.

Rosa was quite content at first, and thought herself lucky to escape reproaches on such easy terms.

But by-and-by so rigorous a system began to gall her. One day she fancied a Bath bun; sent the new maid to the pastrycook's. Pastrycook asked to see the Doctor's order. Maid could not show it, and came back bunless.

Rosa came into the study to complain to her husband.

'A Bath bun,' said Staines. 'Why, they are coloured with anatto, to save an egg, and anatto is adulterated with chromates that are poison. Adulteration upon adulteration. I'll make you a real Bath bun.' Off coat, and into the kitchen, and made her

three, pure, but rather heavy. He brought them her in due course. She declined them languidly. She was off the notion, as they say in Scotland.

'If I can't have a thing when I want it, I don't care for it at all.' Such was the principle she laid down for his future guidance.

He sighed, and went back to his work; she cleared the plate.

One day, when she asked for the carriage, he told her the time was now come for her to leave off carriage exercise. She must walk with him every day, instead.

'But I don't like walking.'

'I am sorry for that. But it is necessary to you, and by-and-by your life may depend on it.'

Quietly, but inexorably, he dragged her out walking every day.

In one of these walks she stopped at a shop window, and fell in love with some baby's things. 'Oh! I must have that,' said she. 'I must. I shall die if I don't; you'll see, now.'

'You shall,' said he, 'when I can pay for it,' and drew her away.

The tears of disappointment stood in her eyes, and his heart yearned over her. But he kept his head.

He changed the dinner-hour to six, and used to go out directly afterwards.

She began to complain of his leaving her alone like that.

'Well, but wait a bit,' said he; 'suppose I am making a little money by it, to buy you something you have set your heart on, poor darling!'

In a very few days after this, he brought her a little box with a slit in it. He shook it, and money rattled; then he unlocked it, and poured out a little pile of silver. 'There,' said he, 'put on your bonnet, and come and buy those things.'

She put on her bonnet, and on the way she asked how it came to be all in silver.

'That is a puzzler,' said he, 'isn't it?'

'And how did you make it, dear; by writing?'

'No.'

'By fees from poor people?'

'What, undersell my brethren! Hang it, no! My dear, I made it honestly, and some day I will tell you how I made it; at present, all I will tell you is this: I saw my darling longing for something she had a right to long for; I saw the tears in her sweet eyes, and—oh, come along, do. I am wretched till I see you with the things in your hand.'

They went to the shop; and Staines sat and watched Rosa buying baby clothes. Oh, it was a pretty sight to see this modest young creature, little more than a child herself, anticipating maternity, but blushing every now and then, and looking askant at her lord and master. How his very bowels yearned over her!

And, when they got home, she spread the things on a table, and they sat hand in hand, and looked at them, and she leaned her head on his shoulder, and went quietly to sleep there.

And yet, as time rolled on, she became irritable at times, and impatient, and wanted all manner of things she could not have, and made him unhappy.

Then he was out from six o'clock till one, and she took it into her head to be jealous. So many hours to spend away from her! Now that she wanted all his comfort.

Presently, Ellen, the new maid, got gossiping in the yard, and a groom told her her master had a sweetheart on the sly, he thought; for he drove the brougham out every evening himself; 'and,' said

the man, 'he wears a moustache at night.'

Ellen ran in, brimful of this, and told the cook; the cook told the washerwoman; the washerwoman told a dozen families, till about two hundred people knew it.

At last it came to Mrs. Staines in a roundabout way, at the very moment when she was complaining to Lady Cicely Treherne of her hard lot. She had been telling her she was nothing more than a lay-figure in the house.

'My husband is housekeeper now, and cook, and all, and makes me delicious dishes, I can tell you; such curries! I couldn't keep the house with five pounds a week, so now he does it with three: and I never get the carriage, because walking is best for me; and he takes it out every night to make money. I don't understand it.'

Lady Cicely suggested that perhaps Dr. Staines thought it best for her to be relieved of all worry, and so undertook the housekeeping.

'No, no, no,' said Rosa; 'I used to pay them all a part of their bills, and then a little more, and so I kept getting deeper; and I was ashamed to tell Christie, so that he calls deceit; and oh, he spoke to me so cruelly once! But he was very sorry afterwards, poor dear! Why are girls brought up so silly? all piano, and no sense; and why are men sillier still to go and marry such silly things? A wife! I am not so much as a servant. Oh, I am finely humiliated, and,' with a sudden hearty naïveté all her own, 'it serves me just right.'

While Lady Cicely was puzzling this out, in came a letter. Rosa opened it, read it, and gave a cry like a wounded deer.

'Oh!' she cried, 'I am a miserable woman. What will become of me?'

The letter informed her bluntly that her husband drove his brougham out every night to pursue a criminal amour.

While Rosa was wringing her hands in real anguish of heart, Lady Cicely read the letter carefully.

'I don't believe this,' said she, quietly.

'Not true! Why, who would be so wicked as to stab a poor inoffensive wretch like me, if it wasn't true?'

'The first ugly woman would, in a minute. Don't you see the witer can't tell you where he goes? Dwives his brougham out! That is all your infamant knows.'

'Oh, my dear friend, bless you! What have I been complaining to you about? All is light, except to lose his love. What shall I do? I will never tell him. I will never affront him by saying I suspected him.'

'Wosa, if you do that, you will always have a serpent gnawing you. No; you must put the letter quietly into his hand, and say, "Is there any twuth in that?"'

'Oh, I could not. I haven't the courage. If I do that, I shall know by his face is there any truth in it.'

'Well, and you must know the twuth. You shall know it. I want to know it too; for, if he does not love you twuly, I will nevaa twust myself to anything so deceitful as a man.'

Rosa, at last, consented to follow this advice.

After dinner she put the letter into Christopher's hand, and asked him quietly was there any truth in that: then her hands trembled, and her eyes drank him.

Christopher read it, and frowned; then he looked up, and said, 'No, not a word. What scoundrels there are in the world! To go and tell you that, now! Why,

you little goose! have you been silly enough to believe it?"

"No," said she, irresolutely. "But do you drive the brougham out every night?"

"Except Sunday."

"Where?"

"My dear wife, I never loved you as I love you now; and, if it was not for you, I should not drive the brougham out of nights. That is all I shall tell you at present; but some day I'll tell you all about it."

He took such a calm high hand with her about it, that she submitted to leave it there; but, from this moment, the serpent doubt nibbled her.

It had one curious effect, though. She left off complaining of trifles.

Now, it happened one night that Lady Cicely Treherne and a friend were at a concert in Hanover Square. The other lady felt rather faint, and Lady Cicely offered to take her home. The carriages had not yet arrived, and Miss Macnamara said to walk a few steps would do her good: a smart cabman saw them from a distance, and drove up, and, touching his hat, said, "Cab, ladies?"

It seemed a very superior cab, and Miss Macnamara said "Yes" directly.

The cabman bustled down, and opened the door; Miss Macnamara got in first, then Lady Cicely; her eye fell on the cabman's face, which was lighted full by a street lamp, and it was Christopher Staines!

He started, and winced; but the woman of the world never moved a muscle.

"Where to?" said Staines, avert-
ing his head.

She told him where, and, when they got out, said, "I'll send it you by the servant."

A flunkey soon after appeared with half-a-crown, and the amateur

coachman drove away. He said to himself, "Come, my moustache is a better disguise than I thought."

Next day, and the day after, he asked Rosa, with affected carelessness, had she heard anything of Lady Cicely.

"No, dear; but I dare say she will call this afternoon: it is her day."

She did call at last, and, after a few words with Rosa, became a little restless, and asked if she might consult Dr. Staines.

"Certainly, dear. Come to his studio."

"No; might I see him here?"

"Certainly." She rang the bell, and told the servant to ask Dr. Staines if he would be kind enough to step into the drawing-room.

Dr. Staines came in, and bowed to Lady Cicely, and eyed her a little uncomfortably.

She began, however, in a way that put him quite at his ease. "You remember the advice you gave us about my little cousin Tadcastah."

"Perfectly: his life is very precarious; he is bilious, consumptive, and, if not watched, will be epileptical; and he has a fond, weak mother who will let him kill himself."

"Exactly: and you recommended a sea voyage, with a medical attendant to watch his diet, and control his habits. Well, she took other advice, and the youth is worse; so now she is frightened, and a month ago she asked me to propose to you to sail about with Tadcastah; and she offered me a thousand pounds a year. I put on my stiff look, and said, "Countess, with every desire to oblige you, I must decline to cawwy that offah to a man of genius, learning, and reputation, who has the ball at his feet in London."

"Lord forgive you, Lady Cicely."

'Lord bless her, for standing up for my Christie.'

Lady Cicely continued. 'Now, this good lady, you must know, is not exactly one of us: the late Earl mawwied into cotton, or wool, or something. So she said, "Name your price for him." I shwugged my shoulders, smiled affably, and as affectedly as you like, and changed the subject. But since then things have happened. I am awfaid it is my duty to make you the judge whether you choose to sail about with that little cub—Rosa, I can beat about the bush no longer. Is it a fit thing that a man of genius, at whose feet we ought all to be sitting with reverence, should drive a cab in the public streets? Yes, Rosa Staines, your husband drives his brougham out at night, not to visit any other lady, as that anonymous wretch told you, but to make a few misewable shillings for you.'

'Oh, Christie!'

'It is no use, Dr. Staines; I must and will tell her. My dear, he drove *me* three nights ago. He had a cabman's badge on his poor arm. If you knew what I suffered in those five minutes! Indeed it seems cruel to speak of it—but I could not keep it from Rosa, and the reason I muster courage to say it before you, sir, it is because I know she has other friends who keep you out of their consultations; and, after all, it is the world that ought to blush, and not you.'

Her ladyship's kindly bosom heaved, and she wanted to cry; so she took her handkerchief out of her pocket without the least hurry, and pressed it delicately to her eyes, and did cry quietly, but without any disguise, like a brave lady, who neither cried nor did anything else she was ashamed to be seen at.

As for Rosa, she sat sobbing

round Christopher's neck, and kissed him with all her soul.

'Dear me!' said Christopher. 'You are both very kind. But, begging your pardon, it is much ado about nothing.'

Lady Cicely took no notice of that observation. 'So, Rosa dear,' said she, 'I think you are the person to decide whether he had not better sail about with that little cub, than — oh !'

'I will settle that,' said Staines. 'I have one beloved creature to provide for. I may have another. I *must* make money. Turning a brougham into a cab, whatever you may think, is an honest way of making it, and I am not the first doctor who has coined his brougham at night. But, if there is a good deal of money to be made by sailing with Lord Tadcaster, of course I should prefer that to cab-driving, for I have never made above twelve shillings a night.'

'Oh, as to that, she shall give you fifteen hundred a year.'

'Then I jump at it.'

'What! and leave *me*!'

'Yes, love: leave you—for your good; and only for a time. Lady Cicely, it is a noble offer. My darling Rosa will have every comfort—ay, every luxury, till I come home, and then we will start afresh, with a good balance, and with more experience than we did at first.'

Lady Cicely gazed on him with wonder. She said, 'Oh! what stout hearts men have! No, no; don't let him go. See; he is acting. His great heart is torn with agony. I will have no hand in parting man and wife—no, not for a day.' And she hurried away in rare agitation.

Rosa fell on her knees, and asked Christopher's pardon for

having been jealous; and that day she was a flood of divine tenderness. She repaid him richly for driving the cab. But she was unnaturally cool about Lady Cicely; and the exquisite reason soon came out. ‘Oh, yes! She is very good; very kind: but it is not for me now! No! you shall not sail about with her cub of a cousin, and leave me at such a time.’

Christopher groaned.

‘Christie, you shall not see that lady again. She came here to part us. *She is in love with you.* I was blind not to see it before.’

alone in the morning-room thinking over this very scene, a footman brought in a card and a note. ‘Dr. Staines begs particularly to see Lady Cicely Treherne.’

The lady’s pale cheek coloured; she stood irresolute a single moment. ‘I will see Dr. Staines,’ said she.

Dr. Staines came in, looking pale and worn; he had not slept a wink since she saw him last.

She looked at him full, and divined this at a glance. She motioned him to a seat, and sat down herself, with her white hand pressing her forehead, and her head turned a little away from him.

Next day, as Lady Cicely sat

(To be continued.)

W^r Petherick.

TAKING DOWN THE HOLLY.

TAKING DOWN THE HOLLY.

Down with the rosemary, and so
 Down with the baies and mistletoe,
 Down with the holly, ivie, all
 Wherewith ye decked the Christmas Hall.—HERRICK.

PAST is the season of joy and mirth, fled are the spirits of sport and fun ;
 Hushed are the song, and the jest, and the laughter, gone are the revellers every one ;
 The lights extinguished, the cakes all eaten, the old dull life again begun.

Silent and sad the festive chambers, of all their trappings, their grace and pride,
 Shorn and despoiled, save one poor relic, one symbol ever of Christmastide,
 That now, all faded, forlorn, neglected, some kind thought claims ere cast aside.

'Tis but the green, the cheerful holly, with boughs that coral-red berries bear,
 The holly that, wreathed about our chambers, gave to our home its festal air ;
 Ever the symbol and sign of Christmas, ever the dress for yule-tide wear.

All things fade, and all things perish, everything in this life decays ;
 Even affections we deemed immortal, and evergreen as those holly sprays,
 They, too, wither, alas ! and fall, like autumn leaves on the woodland ways.

Sad to our sight the scattered berries, sadder the truth we must now deplore,
 That the glad holly, the dear green holly, its mission ended, its empire o'er,
 Its use departed, its beauty faded, may cumber our walls and homes no more.

"Down with the holly," old Herrick sings, down with ivy and mistletoe ;
 Down with the holly, we echo him, yet shall we lay the green king low
 With all such honours as we enthroned him, only a few bright days ago.
 Piously, then, discrown, depose him, as though for sepulture grand and proud,
 What time of his joyful reign, now ended, sweet dear memories thickly crowd
 Around us, while for his passing hymn tenderest echoes whisper loud.

Echoes sweet of the jest and the mirth, of silvery voice and manly tone,
 Childish prattle and playful sallies, missiles of wit from arch lips
 thrown,
 And tender secrets 'tween fond hearts passing under King Holly's
 sheeny throne.

Memories fresh of the pomp, and state, and revel of that enthroning
 day,
 When we crowned the Holly, the dear old Holly, king of our feast, and
 chased away
 All dark shades of care and sorrow, and peopled his court with spirits
 gay.

Every corner and nook and niche where the holly gleamed on our
 chamber walls
 Hath its own story, its own reminiscence, whose interest sweet some
 heart enthrals,
 Each green spray some tender passage, some incident charming to
 mind recalls.

Cherish we, then, for such memories sweet, kindly the good old Holly
 king,
 Praise to his happy reign perfected, peace to his memory let us sing,
 While to our household hearth, his bier, the last of our loved and lost we
 bring.

Yes, to the fire we cast our dead, with hearts that harbour no thought
 of gloom,
 With cheerful rites, and with dancing flames, quickly to ashes shall he
 consume,
 While of his virtues the incense sweet leaves on the air a grateful
 fume.

Fragrant fumes from the embers rising, type of those virtues chaste
 and meet,
 Into our inmost hearts shall steal, and with those memories pure and
 sweet
 Lingering there, again shall rise, when the glad season again we greet.

H. C. SESSIONS.



RECOLLECTIONS OF TWO FINAL FÊTES.

BY THE LATE FELIX MOSHITER WHITEHURST.

MY worthy reader, have you ever reflected how very few things there are which you would like to do for 'the last time?' I have, and I really think that you would find the catalogue to be very brief. There are transactions absolutely necessary, and yet which are as absolutely disagreeable. I dislike Mr. Tomkyn's very much, but have to go and pay him money; I shall be glad when he politely hands me the final and closing receipt, and yet I should not like to know that I should never transact business with him again. Tugg, the dentist, is not a nice man, yet I doubt if we should like to know that we should never give him a chance of getting a pull at us again. There are such things as dull country houses, but to say 'good-bye for ever' even to them would create a feeling of melancholy in most men: women don't feel much.—I have been very forcibly reminded of this within the last few weeks by the sight of two ruins—not ancient monuments, not mediæval even, but ruins, the effects of the eruption of Europe in 1870.

The scene, if you will permit it, shall open in the late summer of 1869, in a 'circle' distinguished for diplomacy, gossip and play in days when Imperial Paris was the garden and the clubs the forcing-houses of those three attributes of excessive refinement.

'Does any fellow know what this fête at St. Cloud is to be?' asked the young Count de St. Vallerie.

'Oh! something magnificent! last two days; bal masque in the garden and Venetian fête on the

river,' says off-hand 'Le petit Marquis,' who, with the reputation of knowing everything, never is right about anything.

'Where did you breakfast, Marquis?'

'Durand's.'

'I thought so.'

'Too much wine of Burgundy,' remarks M. Vieux-Château. 'Why, it is to be an oratorio—Poniatowski, Patti, and that form; Count Jabberer saw the "Programme."

'No, M. Vieux,' adds another, 'thou also art in the boat of error, and rowing with the same oars as our dear little Marquis. It is a strictly political meeting—a declaration of faith sworn before Europe on *salade Impériale* to the sounds of Offenbach; but, before all, it is political.'

'Ah!' interrupts an old dandy of the court of the Citizen King; 'as usual, youth is wrong. It is a fête to celebrate the introduction of the last English fashion.'

'Then, M. le Duc, it is sure of your disapproval.'

The Duc takes a 'prise' from a box which the Regent presented to his ancestor after a row in a gambling-house, and remarks—

'Well, I am not an Imperialist, but I have always gone with the Emperor when he introduced manly English life into France—we were getting effeminate; but "Constitutional Government" is a strong British meat not fit for the French babes, and I fear that the political "Fête of St. Cloud" may unintentionally celebrate the beginning of the end.'

Here there is a movement of alarm among the members, who

seem to think that the Duc, having mounted his hobby, may be about to take a long ride.

To them enters Gaston de St. Audrien, the most glittering of the golden youth of the Second Empire.

'Going to St. Cloud on Wednesday?' asks some one.

'Going to St. Cloud! Of course I'm going to St. Cloud; so are 399 others, and not a soul more. Just seen the Chamberlain's list. You are not in it, nor you, Prince ——'

'But what are you going to do — speak?'

'Well, I hope so. I generally do.' (He does—we used to call it 'babbling.') 'But dancing is the pick of the basket.'

Loud exclamations, 'Dancing!'

'Why, of course; best ball of the season; only good dancers; Empress revised her list, and drafted the slow ones.' (Our young friend is a great improver of the equine race in France, and, like the late respected Lord George Bentinck, is of a stable mind.)

So here was a position. What was the St. Cloud Fête? Who was to be asked?—or, rather, who was asked? In a few hours it was clear that a great many were not.

St. Cloud was ever a charming spot. In the first place, it was the nicest drive you could take out of Paris—a pretty road and 'good going'; you could also drive back safely, even on a dark night, and had not often occasion to cross the 'griddle of iron' with which the intra-mural tramways now blemish all cities and their environs. I remember nothing pleasanter in the off-season, when only the nice people remained in Paris—in all truly refined cities you will see that there is annually an 'aftermath,' a second crop of

society, smaller, perhaps, but quite as satisfying as the original, as good as the first 'harvest home'—than to drive down and dine at the 'Tête Noire' or at the 'Cascade,' where we have all had so many pleasant anti-racing lunches. Then St. Cloud—'Ipse St. Cloud'—was a beautiful place in a lovely situation; the gardens were cultivated, and grew flowers, not horticultural coruscations, while the view of Paris from the Terrace was, perhaps, finer even than that to be seen from the shrine of 'Filet à la Bearvoise' at St. Germain. The palace, too, always looked so comfortable, as if it was lived in, not merely stayed in. The tapestry hung in quite easy-fitting folds round the billiard tables. The pictures seemed to cry, 'Come look at us, we are worth the trouble,' and the statues turned you into temporary marble images of mute admiration.

Apropos, I must relate an anecdote—one of only a few words. Once there, while going through a room, I heard in the next the 'click' of billiard-balls, so I looked in; there were four 'Charbellous' playing.

'Tiens!' shouts one, 'here is X——, and the news from Paris.'

They might have been absent from that loved centre twelve or even fourteen hours. I pitied their sufferings, however, and was about to give what crumbs of comfort I could, when a door opened on the other side, and the Marquis de T——e said—

'But, Monsieur X——, you have kept the Emperor waiting almost a minute.'

It was, I believe, that excessive punctuality which enabled the busiest man in Europe to give so many social audiences—to prove that he kindly remembered so many friends.

By the way, now I am on that

subject, I think I should almost refer to another audience. A gentleman in London had asked for a reception through the writer of this paper, and it was granted some five or six days before the date fixed. *Polleda Mors* intervened. De Morny died, and was buried on the very morning which the interview was to take place. I waited and waited. No friend, no letters, no telegram came. I breakfasted at Durand's, and when the funeral procession had passed, went to the Tuileries, asked for the Chamberlain, and said—

'I did not expect to be received to-day.'

'No! Ah! nothing ever stops the Emperor in his work. He is ready to see you and your friend.'

'But,' I said, 'here am I in a shooting-coat, and, to tell the truth, my friend is not here.'

Chamberlain, amused, says—'Well, if you won't come in in a brown coat, I can't help it. Message from the Emperor, "Whenever the friends of X—— come, I shall be glad to see them."

I go home and find this telegram —six *heures de retard*—'Can't leave London; tell the Emperor that I'll come on Friday.'

To the best of my remembrance, I never interfered about an audience for anyone any more—*Pas si bête.*

But to return to St. Cloud, it was always a pleasant sight, and, indeed, I remember a 'fair' there, which was one of the most charming Wilkie-like features of life I have ever seen in France.

As the day for this other mysterious 'Fête' approached, curiosity increased, and the desire for impossible invitations grew in the same ratio. Give a fête in a madhouse, say there are no tickets, and all the world and his wife will want to go. It was known that Ollivier was to be the coming

man. Was he to 'say a few words' at St. Cloud? Some said 'Yes,' some 'No,' and both were equally well informed.

I wrote to a friend of mine, and will give the letter *in extenso*.

'Dear de B——, what's up? shall we go and see together?'

Answer, also *in extenso*:

'Yes! I confess it beats me.

'Trousers, too! don't like it.'

Now it is necessary to comment on this last paragraph—

'Trousers, too, don't like it.'

You see the French system of man's full dress differs, or, I should say differed, from that of England. If you went to see the Emperor in private audience, you had to array yourself, perhaps in the early glare of the

'Gaudy, babbling, and remorseless day,' in that nice black suit and white tie, which look really quite new when you go out to dinner at 8.30 P.M., but has a shiny, not to say threadbare, appearance when you turn the domestic latchkey at 5 A.M. This was the fullest dress, and, as usual, required by etiquette; and one less becoming to the manly form, let us say at twelve o'clock on an average July day, I think it would be impossible to design. A fat Frenchman wanting something and waiting for the giver or promiser of gifts (for this applied also to those in authority, who were apt themselves to wear a dressing-gown and a smoking-cap) in the clothes he was married in, with a bundle of papers in his hat, and a tight pair of white kid gloves into which he strives to struggle, is not a dignified spectacle, nor can that warm citizen be in a proper frame of mind to argue with a cool minister smoking his cigarette.

At the State balls, the equiva-

lent of our 'drawing-rooms' and 'levées,' of course court dress or uniform was the order of the evening; but when the Empress received *en intimité*, as was to be the case at St. Cloud, knee-breeches were *de rigueur*.

Hence my friend's allusion to trousers—he considered it a 'Radical innovation,' and when I laughed at him, I remember, he said, 'Go on—grin away—but I don't like it. Ceremonies are going fast—take care dignitaries do not follow.'

When I came to think about it, I confess he was right. If Rouher, in full dress, with all his decorations, had kept the place instead of Ollivier (a little-minded man, with a 'light heart,' who, having no 'decorations,' thought it unmanly, unmeaning, undignified, to wear them—these circumstances altered (jewel) cases—and who wrapped up his wife in a sort of 'swaddling' evening dress, in order that no one should say that she, any more than his political system, was *decolletée*), I believe we should have still an Imperial government, which must certainly be better than the present 'Brummagem Republic,' and that I should have written no story about ruins, because the ruins would not have existed—if ruins can exist. So when 'the time came and the season,' we trotted away merrily through the 'Bois' to see what we should see at St. Cloud.

What we did see was this. It was a lovely warm night; the palace was one blaze of light and flowers, but all the salons were as deserted as the 'Hall of Silence' in a fairy tale. The Master of the Ceremonies, however, came to meet us—he was a school-fellow of my companion's—and told us to do that which 'Maud' has so often been requested to do. Then,

accordingly, we followed him into the garden, and certainly there we saw a pretty and peculiar sight. The gardens were illuminated à giorno, and constantly changing hues kept colouring the groups which were scattered over the lawn and terraces. Grand old trees cast evening shadows, and from the dense shrubberies came the music of invisible orchestras. It was evident that men predominated, but all the grandest dames of the Imperial Court were there in the most fitting costumes which could be extracted from the 'Rue de la Paix.'

Excepting the 'Corps Diplomatique,' there were not ten foreigners present, and it soon was evident that the *raison d'être* of the fête was political, and that the fête itself might be historical.

The Emperor and Empress glided about from group to group speaking to all. The Empress was more gracious even than usual, and the Emperor, as it were, offered audiences, and soon had a series of improvised 'levées,' at which he explained the theory of constitutional government, which he had just, at the instigation of Prince Napoleon, granted so unselfishly, to the serious damage of his throne. Prince Napoleon was there, talking, as usual, better than any one present, and being listened to as his striking social eloquence deserves.

The Prince is, perhaps, the best general talker it has ever been my good luck to meet; he can listen, too—an act little known to the French. M. Emile de Girardin talks like a book, but he can't listen. Perhaps he is like the great talker—thought to be stone-deaf—of whom the late Lord Alvanley said, 'Tis not so much that he is deaf, as that he is quite out of practice of listening.'

The evening was pronounced a

'success,' and an Italian diplomatist said it was *una vera festa di statuto*. Then the strains of Offenbach broke the silence of the 'Enchanted Castle,' and in its vast salons the Eurydices who had followed the Franco-German Orpheus found not only the best salons to dance in, the best music to dance to, but also a supper, which was highly and deservedly appreciated by all. By Lucullus, how they did eat! To be sure they had all just started with a fresh constitution. About this time my friend and myself departed for our beds.

'Capital fun, and everything well done. Yes, excellent. I hope the same host will ask us there again!' The shadows of the grand old residence were cast over the steep hill as we descended to cross the bridge, and the fine, venerable trees murmured, not *adieu*, only *au revoir*.

It was on a fine, bright day of early winter, during the siege of Paris, that three of us agreed to try to get a walk beyond the walls of the beleaguered city. We had heard—for everything was a 'report' to us—that St. Cloud and Meudon were burnt to the ground, and we were anxious to know the truth. We had permission to pass into the 'Bois,' and so, hoping to escape for an hour or two from the horrid depression of 'the gayest capital in Europe,' we started on our ways. It will be some time before any of us forget the feeling of desolation which fell on us as we passed the well-remembered entrance, and found ourselves alone in the dismembered 'Bois.' To the left the ramparts stared stark down on the stumps of trees—the road was mined—the 'Lac des Dames' half empty, and the shore 'poached' into deep mud by the 'watering orders' of cavalry and artillery,

and not a living soul, save ourselves, to awake the dead silence, which, however, was occasionally disturbed by a great, useless discharge from 'Bastion No. 27,' or a growl from distant 'Valerien.' Boulogne, where resides Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, was a village of the dead. Just at the end of the 'Bois' was a kind of sutler's shed, where bad coffee and evil spirits were being retailed to a fatigue party of some line regiment (encamped carelessly and dirtily round the end of the race-course), which had been told off for the duty of fetching the day's 'rations' of horrid-looking horse-flesh.

On we went till we reached the broad street or 'place' which leads to the bridge. At each corner were little groups of idlers watching a 'little affair' between our sentries posted on the right of the bridge and some Prussians in a house close to the church of St. Cloud—every now and then they bolted like rabbits. We crossed the broad place, could not help halting to look at the broken bridge and the blackened (unnecessarily) 'Tête Noire,' when a ball from a needle-gun warned us that we had better move on; we acted on the hint at the double, and made in safety the corner of the best street in Boulogne, which runs parallel to the Seine. This street consists of a series of new and very pretty villas, the property of rich Paris men of business, who prided themselves on gardens, carriages, and all that makes suburban life pleasant—they were all deserted, usually, too, without preparation, and gave excellent evidence to the fact, that during a war everybody is a marauder, for, as yet, the Prussians had not here crossed the river. We entered several gardens, but could get no view of the Seine or the Palace; at

last we reached the farthest villa, which was the main-guard.

' You can go into the garden and see the view, if you like,' said the captain on guard, ' but at your own risk; for the whole of that line of wood is full of sentries and patrols, and you are well within range.'

The self-concealing power of the Prussian soldier is wonderful. At last, one of our sentries beckoned to us, and said, ' Now you shall see!' Behind a tree we then discovered a sentry. Our man gave him a chassepot ball, which he returned with a needle-gun bullet, and quite a nice little duel ensued. During this ' affair' (as the Trochu papers loved to say), we ventured to look for St. Cloud.

' St. Cloud! That is not St. Cloud!'

' Oui, monsieur—or, at least, it was.'

' But I mean, the Palace!'

' Yes, monsieur.'

And it was true. The festive hall, about which I have written above, was represented by a great blackened ruin of four tottering walls; the garden, by a burial-ground; the stables, by an hospital, and the good company, by a German regiment fully prepared to destroy every palace, church, house, bridge, or hospital which blocked up their road to victory.

And now for the remembrance of another final festival.

Whatever the enemies of the Second Empire may have to say against it in a military, political, or financial sense, I think that no one will deny that socially it was a great success. Paris was never known to be so stately, and yet so pleasant—so court-like, and yet so intimate. The host and hostess had the magic of manner; they loved to entertain the stranger magnificently; and the French love that their visitors shall be so treated

'en prince' that, when they return to London, Vienna, Florence, or St. Petersburg, they shall say, ' Yes, very well—but you should see Paris!'

Any one who assisted at the international London and Paris season of the last Paris Exposition year, will back me up in this assertion. The London season was unexceptionally brilliant, in honour of the Sultan and the Viceroy; but, I regret to say, in that intimate society of French and English which had together fought the early battle of the campaign on the other side of the Manche, it was still—' Yes, very well done, *sans doute*—but, do you remember the Tuilleries, the Rue Courcelles, Countess Cowley's, Princess de Metternich's, and that evening at the Prussian Embassy?'

The truth is, that in Paris there were palaces—in London, only very comfortable houses, with rooms admirably fitted to dine a premier, or a bishop and his secretary or chaplain, and sixteen other guests, but as unfit for fêtes, or balls, as is an average *salone* in an Italian palazzo, where the object seems to have been to build as many small rooms as possible.

The last Imperial ' party'—I use the expression advisedly, and in contradiction to 'entertainment'—was the *bal intime* of an 'Empress' Monday.' Perhaps this would be better described as a 'few friends' after a small dinner. A small party selected from a vast visiting-list; the best of music and flowers, floods of light, and 'refreshments,' quite sufficient to carry the most inveterate cotillon dancer well into the night, even if Henri Marquis de Caux, the cheeriest of companions and dancers, led it.

But I wish to allude to the *last* fête of the Tuilleries—certainly not select, nor was it celebrated at a festive season. The tickets should

have been printed in blood, and the envelopes illustrated by fire and flames. The much and most deservedly-abused Commune—and here let me distinctly declare that, as far as the stranger was concerned, it was more polite, obliging and anxious to 'make friends' than the aggravating, irritating National Defence Government, with its anonymous denunciations, listened to till every foreigner was liable to arrest as a Prussian spy on the oral evidence of the next ruffian in the street—was determined not to be behindhand in charity, and so the powers that were determined to give a concert for the benefit of the sick and wounded—the site the Hall of Marshals, and the tickets three francs each. You must kindly remember that half-a-crown, during those 'Commune' days, was certainly equal to five shillings, and that money and food were, even then, 'articles of luxury,'—articles far beyond the reach even of many people who had been entrapped back into Paris by the delusive hope that, after the Prussians had, *manqué leur entrée* and gone back home, the 'dove of peace and promise' had permanently settled on the Palais d'Industrie. The timidity of the Government frightened away that pigeon, and events—created by Thiers—gave us the Commune concert.

A small party—as many ladies as men—agreed to pay the three francs each, and witness this peculiar scene, to be performed on so curious a stage. It was a gloomy evening, I well remember—but all was gloomy then—when we went down into the artillery camp (which was once the Tuileries gardens) in which 'Nisus and Euryalus' were always about to start for their 'match'—which now will never 'come off,'—and where that wonderful old man, used to

tell secrets to the sparrows—which, I am persuaded, under pretence of eating bread from his hands and mouth, listened to him; perhaps they were scattered à *vol d'oiseau*, and the sparrows were the real cowards, which have done more to ruin the capital of inflammatory France than the larger birds ever did to save the Capitol of the Eternal City.

We found a *queue*, four deep, extending half-way up to the Tennis Court. In vain we tried bribing: we went as far as tenpence, and shook our francs at the money-taker.

'Each in his turn, citoyen,' said a man with a scarf.

Why does a 'patriot' always wear a scarf? We waited, and waited, and waited. At last someone said: 'I think charity had better go home to the cradle in which it was born.' Then a brilliant idea struck one of the party: he suggested trying the 'Grand entrance,' in the Rue de Rivoli. We went there. I confess that I felt low when I saw red-scarved citizens by dozens stopped at the point of the bayonet. We, too, were arrested and bayoneted. We asked politely for an officer.

'What do you want?' he asked.

'To pay our money, and go into the *salon*.'

'Oh! is that all? You know the way. Go up the old staircase, and you will find it—all right!'

So up the staircase—which was wont to be lined with well set-up Cent-Gardes and drooping palms—we proceeded, through what I am afraid I must describe as a deuced odd *lot of sundries*. We wished to pay those three francs. (We did not, in fact; for dear to the household was even that half-crown which a virtuous wife could, in those days, offer to her husband.)

'Allez donc!' said a cobbler.

' Go in—but look after your citoyenne.'

We went in. It was an odd scene—a political orgy. A dense mass of men, women, and children, in every costume that imagination can conceive. As in old times, at Almack's a bench of *Patronesses!*—the ladies of the horse-flesh market in the Place de St. Pierre. In one room, orators; in the Hall of Marshals—where the disciples of Poole, Smalpage, Cumberland, and Dusautoy have 'danced before the king,' in the best-made clothes to be found in Europe—were National Guards in somebody else's uniform—in shirts and trowsers (I was almost going to say, without), in cavalry cloaks, rags, and tatters. On one side they sang; on another, they lectured; and every three minutes broke out the '*Marseillaise*.'

' I shall sing a song next,' says a charcoal-seller, with a very black face, very white teeth, and a capital expression of countenance. ' I have not come all the way from Belleville to remain dumb as a coal. *Allez!*! 'Silence à la mort!'

I hope that that is not a British diplomatist who is looking on. It would be such a blow to the Radicals, if they thought that one of that aristocratic class was 'reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting' the intimate workings of this curious social eruption—looking on with sorrow and sympathy, too, in spite of the atrocious 'Red' doctrine. Beer and the '*Marseillaise*'; a mother suckling her poor babe—whose child is that poor atom? Marriage is annulled—faith is ignored, and religion is a crime! Speeches from true patriots—spirits and pipes—

a classical concert—private political lectures, and my friend the charcoal-seller intoning the '*Ça Ira*' (which he don't know)—all this at once! No wonder there was a dense, almost a dangerous, crowd.

' Take care of Madame, and go away,' said a voice.

I looked round, and found that two men—a blacksmith, who might have been, and a man in a blouse who evidently was, a gentleman—had formed a guard for the lady who was on my arm. They cleared the way for us, and we went home.

We had no business in that galley; but I am not sorry to have rowed in it. And when, later, I saw the dead piled in heaps round my doors, and then buried in the gutter—when, after months and months, I see these ignorant, misguided men judicially murdered, I think of the behaviour of these infatuated lunatics, and of the calm, cold-blooded conduct of those whose indecision caused this 'midsummer madness.'

On the morning of 24th of May, 1871, I walked into the Place de la Madelaine: it was enveloped in a thick smoke. I had been blockaded for forty-eight hours, and was ignorant of everything save the awful carnage before my eyes.

' What is it?' I asked.

' What!' said a dear siege-friend of mine, who sold vegetables in the Rue Tronchet—' what, citoyen?—why all Paris is in flames, and the cloud you see there is the smoke from the expiring ashes of the Tuileries.'

Am I justified in heading this paper, 'Recollections of Two Final Fêtes?'

MADAME DUFOUR.

By E. LYNN LINTON.

'I WONDER who she is!' said Walter Drummond, looking back as he left the churchyard.

'Who?' asked Kate Hyslop with a displeased air.

'That lady in the blue and gold shawl, who sat opposite to us in church,' he answered.

'Oh! that red-headed woman?' indifferently. 'Why, she was a stranger, of course; what else should she be?'

'But I wonder who she is, and where she comes from,' repeated Walter with insistence.

'Really, Walter, you are very odd! What concern can it be of yours, and why should you wonder about her at all?' returned Kate with her iciest manner; and her betrothed, taking the hint, let the matter drop. But thought being free, he pondered all the more, and wearied himself with conjecturing, 'Who can she be?' and 'Is she going to stay here?'

Hinton, where they all lived, was not a pretty place; nor a very secluded place; nor a place that led to anywhere else; nor that was of any importance anyhow. It was just a dull English village without a history; where life went on from year to year in the same groove. So that the prospect of a beautiful young woman, a stranger to everybody, locating herself at Hinton was something to be noted as a phenomenon; and Walter's curiosity was only natural, under the circumstances.

Soon the whole place was astir with the news that a Madame Dufour, the pretty woman who had sat on Sunday in the chancel just opposite the vicarage pew, had taken Elm Cottage where old

Miss Donne had lived; and that she was busy furnishing it in a manner so costly as to be next door to wicked.

Here, then, was food for endless speculation, and guesses at the riddles set by charity or ill-nature. A lady, young, beautiful; evidently rich far beyond the measure of the village; with a foreign name and an English accent; a madame with never a monsieur to the fore, yet not in widow's weeds; not an inch of clue to her former history or her last abode—what better amusement could Hinton have for the dreary winter months than discussing such a phenomenon, and quarrelling over the probabilities of her worthlessness or her respectability? So far as that went, however, the majority of voices decided in favour of the former; and but a few of the more credulous, of whom Walter Drummond, the Vicar's only son, was the chief, stood out for the theory of her respectability, 'until she should be proved the other thing.' Which was just the difficulty; proof on either side being exactly the one thing needed.

The stranger came regularly to church, which counted for something in her favour; and she was reported kind to the poor, and charitable beyond the common run of even generous folks. Not that Hinton quite endorsed this last trait. It had its own ideas about excess of any kind; and excess of virtue fared no better at its hands than if it had been a vice. Little by little, however, her pleasant smile and genial manner broke down some of the stiffer prejudices which her strangerhood and

unlikeness to Hinton laws of life had created; and after a sufficient time had elapsed to forbid the appearance of injudicious haste, the Vicar and his wife called on her—rather solemnly, it must be confessed, but with a good meaning at bottom.

The next step was to ask her to tea. Kate Hyslop was by no means well pleased when she heard of this arrangement; and in general, Kate Hyslop's wishes ruled the vicarage. But Mr. Drummond had certain notions on priestly duties which not even his heiress-ward could touch; and this was one of them. He had taken it into his counsel that it was his duty, as the father of his flock, to usher in among them this outlying sheep of his fold; and he did it; though his future daughter-in-law tossed up her small, smooth head in disdain, and even the placid wife of his bosom looked dubious. So now Madame Dufour was marked with the right brand, and the whole parish gathered round her and bleated her a welcome to their pastures. From having been a kind of exile among them, she became the most popular plaything of the day; Kate Hyslop alone refusing to bleat with the rest, or to burn incense at her shrine.

From the first there was a distinct antagonism between these two women; and from the first Kate hated Madame Dufour, and Madame Dufour feared Kate. Those cold, steel-grey eyes of hers, which no one had ever seen dark with love or moist with tenderness, were like weapons that seemed to kill all sympathy, all affection. Her calm voice that never faltered, her composed manner that never hurried, her set words that disdained to trip over a colloquialism, her whole being, controlled, conventional, of the strictest order

of the Pharisees—what a contrast she formed to the bright, versatile, pleasure-loving Madame Dufour, whose fair face was like a mirror wherein you could read her ever-changing moods, and whose voice and manner had all the tremulous shades which belong to a sensitive nature—or consummate art! But Kate saw no beauty in her.

'She fatigues me with her vivacity; she sickens me with her theatrical sentiment, and her affectation of grace is too transparent for anything but contempt,' she said scornfully, when asked if Madame Dufour was not charming.

While she on her side said, with a pretty action she had with her hands, 'Miss Kate Hyslop? She is the ice-maiden bound in chains! she makes me shudder as if she was a ghost.'

'Or a detective,' said Kate with emphasis; when some good-natured friend reported to her what the new-comer had said.

The word struck. It was bitter and cruel; but then bitter things and cruel always do strike; and Miss Hyslop's sharp surmise made the round of the parish underhand, folks whispering among themselves, 'She is not so far out, isn't our Vicar's young lady; and maybe the detective will light on our fine Madame some day, at last.' But no one said this to herself, and the pretty stranger still lived in the sunshine and nourished herself on incense.

Walter Drummond's habits were changing. From a docile, steady, methodical young man, in time, proverbially good-natured if not very bright, and as innocently candid as a child, he was fast becoming irregular, uncertain, and reticent. He was always out, and no one knew where; nor would he explain when he came

home, silent and depressed as no one had ever seen him before. Neither his mother's business nor his fiancée's pleasures touched him.

Kate looked on at this change, and said nothing. She had evidently her own mind on the matter; and Mrs. Drummond, who knew her, was quite aware of the future preparing for her boy. But she wisely left them to fight it out between them, knowing that the struggle had to come, if not about one thing then about another; and Kate had to be crowned queen when all was over.

'Walter, I want you to ride with me to-day,' said Kate one morning.

'I am very sorry,' he answered hurriedly; 'I cannot to-day.'

'No! Why?'

'I have the boat to look to,' he said.

She fixed her cold eyes on him steadily, and her look brought the blood into his face.

'Are you going to visit Madame Dufour again?' she said scornfully. 'You need not speak, Walter, your looks are answer enough,' she added. 'Pray don't add falsehood to the list of your lately acquired accomplishments. It is what I have long suspected; what, knowing you, and how weak you are, I foresaw from the first.'

'And what is it you suspected and foresaw from the first, may I ask?' said Walter angrily.

'Why should I say it? You know as well as I; and I don't care to dig in ploughed ground,' she answered slowly.

'I will not allow your insinuations!' said Walter with vehemence.

'Will you not? But if I choose to make them?'

'Then I will not listen to them,' he said.

'Your friend shall, Walter,' said Kate deliberately.

'Kate, you are trying me too far!' he cried. 'What folly is this you have taken up?'

'No folly at all, Walter—on my side. I will forbear to characterize what you have taken up, on yours. I only know the fact, that all these long absences of yours—these mysterious affairs which occupy you from morning to night—mean simply that you are spending the time you deny to us with this Madame Dufour. I say no more, and insinuate no more—no more, at least,' she added with a slight sneer, 'than your own conscience echoes.'

'And if I do see Madame Dufour at times, am I not master of my own actions?' said Walter.

'I also of my own thoughts,' she replied.

'You are free to be your own mistress for all time, and in all ways, so far as I am concerned,' said Walter indignantly, a great hope irradiating his face as he spoke.

'Thanks,' she answered, her monotonous voice as calm as ever. 'You mean that for magnanimity, I daresay; but I shall not accept it. I always have been, and always mean to be, my own mistress under all circumstances; you know that, Walter. But we have wandered from our point—will you ride with me to-day?'

'I told you before, I cannot,' said Walter sullenly.

'Very well,' she answered; 'but neither shall Madame Dufour.'

She rose on this and walked steadily and quietly out of the room, leaving Walter with the sensation that a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet.

Kate had seen clearly and spoken truly. Walter had carried to the beautiful stranger the inner wealth of a nature which, until now, had been given to no one. The fascination which had begun on

that first day when he saw her sitting opposite to him in church, fair as a flower, the sun touching her golden hair like an aureole and dyeing the blue and gold of her Indian shawl into a kind of mystic drapery fit for an angel or a saint, had gone on until now, and had gone on increasing. He had engaged himself to Kate Hyslop two years ago, it is true; but it was a thing that had been done for him, more than one which he had voluntarily chosen for himself. His parents wished it; Kate's father had wished it; and Kate herself wished it—which clenched the matter. So Walter, who was merely a good-natured, unexacting, inexperienced boy as yet—a manly young fellow enough in frame, but a little 'soft' in his character, by having been kept close to his mother's apron-string all his life—drifted into the affair as boys of his kind do drift into such a thing, when manifestly prepared for them by the potent influences at home. At the best, however, Kate was only to him like a sister; not always so nice, and not always so dear.

When Madame Dufour came, the chained fountain leaped into life and melody. To say that he loved her is to say little. It was adoration, more than common love. It was the worship of a devotee for a saint, combined with the tenderness of strength for something weaker, more yielding, less helpful than itself. He loved her as he had never loved before, as he had had no prevision he could have ever loved at all. And she? —Well! she first played, and then she learnt.

That sensitive face with its ever-changing expression, like the tremulous sunshine that flutters among the leaves, grew daily more tender, more responsive. Yet in word and act she affected a

staid, half grave maternity that merely fascinated her adorer the more. He was 'her boy,' she used to say with those sweet lips of hers that looked as if they had not been in existence more than twenty years at most—Kate Hyslop always said she was long past thirty, and 'made up'; and the youth—just two years older than she looked—longed to tell her that, if he was a boy to her in the humility of his devotion, the nothingness of his personality, he was a man to himself in the passion and the power of his love.

But, now, what was he to do? Brought face to face with Kate's not unfounded suspicion and not unrighteous wrath, he felt that he must take a step as decided as it would be final. He must choose which to do: abandon Madame Dufour, or break with his betrothed; cease to visit the one he loved better than his life—and if so, what reason to give her, she who was so far above him he dared not even hint at his love?—or he must disappoint his parents, mar his future prospects, break his plighted word, and distress one whose only fault was her love for him and her claim to be loved in return. Like many a braver man, Walter postponed his decision; waiting for events to steer him, and clear themselves.

At luncheon-time he rushed off to Elm Cottage, thinking only that, come what would, at least he should see her once again.

Was he expected? Half lying, half sitting on the sofa, was Madame Dufour, dressed, as she always did dress, in the most exquisite, the most seductive manner; indeed, she did not dress, she draped. On a small table, covered with ruby-coloured velvet, stood wine, fruit, and flowers,

and a large bowl of old Venetian glass, full of ice. It was ethereal food for luncheon; but Madame Dufour was ethereal in her food, and often spoke with laughing scorn of the materialistic English miss who ate and drank like a man. Kate Hyslop had what is called a wholesome appetite, and liked cheese and beer.

'Ah, my boy!' she said with her caressing accent and young-motherly manner, holding out both her hands to him as he came in, but not rising to receive him. 'Toujours le bienvenu!'

'How kind you are to let me come,' stammered Walter, flinging himself on a footstool by her side. He was pale and agitated, but his eyes told the old story as eloquently as they had always told it. 'How can I ever thank you for all your kindness to me?'

'By not assuming that I have been kind at all,' she said; 'or, lightly touching his shoulder with her fan, 'by putting it the other way, Mr. Walter, and counting me grateful to you.'

The young man flung back his head; Madame Dufour's fair face flushed, and her eyes drooped at the love that was in his.

He took her hand, and carried it to his lips. 'Better than the wealth of the world!' he murmured in a low voice; but she, playfully pulling one of his brown curls, said in a pretended anger that was more bewitching than even her kindness, 'That is what you deserve, naughty boy! You presume too much, mon ami.'

'And the punishment will make me transgress again,' said Walter timidly, still holding her hand.

'Fi donc! was there ever such a forward boy? Un petit écolier comme ça! Ma foi! you are beyond your age, Master Walter.'

'But not beyond your——' He stopped, and trembled visibly.

'My forbearance? Soit! But we women are all weak,' she said, helping him out of his difficulty.

'Not all,' said Walter with a rueful recollection of Kate; and Madame laughed, as if she had divined.

Just then a ring came to the front door.

'Tiens! who can that be?' she cried, with surprised eyebrows.

Walter first crimsoned like a schoolboy caught, and then turned pale like a man before whom is a struggle unto death. He knew who it was, clearly enough; and Madame Dufour read his knowledge in his face.

So, the battle had come, had it? Bien! She was ready. Let it come, if it must; and the sooner the relative strength of each was known the better.

She never raised herself from her lounging attitude, but even curled herself round into softer lines. The tender manner grew more tender, the sweet, low voice more caressing, the creeping touch of her long white hand more velvety, as it first pushed back the golden fringe that shadowed her forehead, then rested on Walter's chestnut head; the tremulous face no longer dimpled with smiles or quivered with sympathy, but took on itself a mask half mocking, half impassive, and wholly irritating to an antagonist; and then Miss Hyslop was ushered into the room, to find the siren in her most dangerous mood, surrounded by her most bewitching accessories, with her own lover, who was also her rival's, sitting at her feet, worshipping.

'Miss Hyslop! how very kind!' said Madame Dufour in a pretty, languid voice. 'A rare pleasure, but none the less welcome,' she added, offering her hand, but still keeping to the sofa and those gracious undulating lines and

curves into which she had posed herself.

'I came for Mr. Drummond, Madame Dufour; not to pay you a visit,' said Kate in her stoniest manner. 'Walter, you are wanted at home.'

'Poor Walter! I hope he is not to be scolded very severely at home,' said Madame Dufour with a mocking accent, and a tender glance at the young man.

'Who wants me?' asked Walter indifferently, playing with Madame's little dog.

'I,' said Kate; and she said it plump and hard.

'Your pleasure?' was Walter's reply, not looking up.

'I prefer not to discuss my affairs in public,' said Kate. 'I want you; that is enough: so, if you please, Walter, come; and at once.'

'I am engaged,' said Walter; 'I cannot.'

'Madame Dufour, I must ask your assistance,' then said Kate, turning to her rival. 'Will you kindly command Mr. Drummond to obey me?'

'What an extraordinary proposition!' laughed the siren. 'What do you take me for, Miss Hyslop?'

'What do I take you for?' repeated Kate very slowly, and eyeing her keenly. 'Well, I might take you for many things—for an actress, say; or an adventuress; for a runaway; perhaps for a woman who ought to be—where shall I say?—in Millbank for forgery, like that Clara Bell the papers were so full of just before you came here; or I might take you for an honest woman, intending no evil to any one, and careful to avoid scandal. You see, Madame Dufour, a stranger as you are may be anything. Who knows?'

During Kate's speech Madame Dufour's face had not changed a

muscle, save the faintest quivering of her upper lip, and the sudden starting of big drops both on it and on her brow.

'You have a fertile fancy, Miss Hyslop,' she drawled out with a little laugh. 'Really your roll-call of possibilities is so crowded, I cannot remember half my probable characters.'

'Have you taken leave of your senses, Kate?' demanded Walter sternly.

'No; but you have,' she replied, as sternly. 'Again I ask, Walter, will you leave Madame Dufour, and come with me?'

'And again I answer, I will not,' said Walter, taking the long white hand in his. 'You have made it necessary, Kate, that some one should protect Madame from insult; and I will be the one to do so.'

'Poor simpleton!' said Kate with disdain. 'You are a greater fool, Walter, than I took you for; and I never thought you very wise. However, your wisdom or your folly is no business of mine. I have done my duty; and you must act as you choose.'

Without another word she turned round, and went out; and as she shut the street-door after her Madame Dufour sank into Walter's arms in a violent fit of sobbing and weeping; and Walter, holding her to his heart, kissed away her tears, and told her that he loved her better than life itself, and that he would devote his life to her service, now and for ever.

'Dear boy!' she said, at length, smiling through the disorder of her passion. 'It was worth the anguish of enduring her insolence to know that I have such a *preux chevalier*—that I have rescued such a gallant soul from so ungenial a fate!'

And while this scene was taking

place Kate was walking homeward through the lane, muttering, half aloud, 'I wonder if that shaft struck true! I could not read her face. I wonder if it is she, after all! That foolish fellow! But I will not let him go, all the same. He suits me; and he will soon forget that wicked woman when he finds out what she is, if she is as I believe her to be. If she is not—'

But this thought displeased her, and she put it from her to indulge the dream that she was what a certain letter—received that morning from London in answer to one of inquiry from her touching a suspicion she had entertained from the first—gave great cause to suppose.

Kate was so far wise in her generation that she could hold her peace. Having shot her bolt, she could afford to wait the result. Accordingly, when Walter returned home late in the evening, she received him with the quiet stolidity common to her; and neither by word nor look made the faintest reference to the stormy scene that had taken place at Elm Cottage that morning. If anything, indeed, she was kinder than usual to her lover; while he, fuming and excited, found himself in the unpleasant position of a man engaged to two women at once, and held to his bond by the one he was burning to throw over. She prevented, too, the reproaches with which his father and mother were charged; and gained golden opinions for her own part for the generous affection they said she displayed towards one so unsatisfactory.

'Oh! I know him. He will come back to his better self as soon as this horrid creature has gone; and go she shall,' she said, smiling in a frosty manner; while Mrs. Drummond kissed her,

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tearfully, and the Vicar called her 'blessed among women.'

'Mamma,' she said to Mrs. Drummond two or three days after this, during which they had scarcely seen Walter; nor had she noticed a certain letter of his, giving her back her freedom, and breaking off the proposed marriage; 'I want you to ask Madame Dufour to dinner to-morrow.'

'My love!' said the Vicar's wife in a tone of astonishment; 'why have that odious woman here?'

'Do not ask me, pray,' she answered. 'I wish it.'

'Well, my dear, of course you know we all study your wishes in everything,' said Mrs. Drummond humbly. 'I am sure, if you like it, I have no objection; and I suppose papa will have none.'

'Thanks. A gentleman is coming from London,' then said Kate indifferently.

And Mrs. Drummond's eager note of demand was stifled in its birth by the impenetrable iciness of look that her future daughter-in-law turned full upon her.

'Then there will be two to dinner?' she said, fidgetting.

'If Madame Dufour comes, yes,' answered Kate.

'Very well, dear,' returned Mrs. Drummond. 'I will see to the dinner.'

'What is the meaning of this, my boy?' asked pretty Madame Dufour, when the servant brought in a note from the Vicarage, requesting the pleasure of her company at dinner to-morrow at half-past six o'clock.

Walter was startled, too. What did it mean? Had his father and mother taken to heart how things stood with him; and were they prepared to receive her he loved as their own? Had Kate

spread a snare?—or was she, too, minded to be generous, and to give up what she could not hold?—or did it all mean nothing more than an ordinary act of politeness, a piece of parsonic hospitality to one of the flock?

'Shall I go?' then asked Madame.

'Oh, yes! yes!' exclaimed Walter.

'You wish it, my boy?' and her hand passed caressingly over the youth's forehead.

'Wish it! Do I wish to live in heaven!' he cried. 'Don't you know it is heaven to me where you are?'

'But this terrible Miss Kate; will she like to see me?'

'Oh! don't you know that my mother would not have asked you else?' answered Walter innocently. 'Kate is the mistress of the Vicarage, not my mother.'

'And she will not insult me again? She will not punish me, Walter, for what I cannot help—your love for me; and'—in a lower voice, a shy, sweet, tremulous voice—'mine for you?'

On his knees before her, his fresh, young, fervid face turned upward to hers as she bent so gracefully, so tenderly towards him, his glad eyes dark and moist with the passionate love which at last had found its home, Walter poured forth his thanks, his adoration, his protestations there was nothing to fear, and his assurance of defence, in a breath; and Madame Dufour, smiling, radiant, lovely, turned to her writing-table and wrote her acceptance of the invitation on pink scented paper with a golden monogram and coronet on the top.

'You see,' she said, with a pretty laugh, pointing it out to Walter, 'I am really a countess; but this is the only sign of my state in which I indulge myself. A countess with a couple of maids in a remote

English village! Trop ridicule, n'est-ce pas, mon ami?'

Ah! what loveliness, what humility, what condescension, what rational understanding of life! All this and more Walter trolled forth as his song of love; and Madame played the symphony to his praises by her own praises of him.

The gentleman from London came, true to his time; and Kate took it on herself to show him the one local lion, namely, the church, with its old monuments, its fine Norman arch, its quaint carvings, and the like. Their talk was interesting meanwhile; but it was not on the things they went to see; and a listener might have heard, 'Madame Dufour,' 'Clara Bell,' 'forgery,' 'actress,' 'clever escape,' 'known bad character,' uttered more than once. But it came at last to a conclusion, the gentleman saying warmly, 'But after all, miss, you have been the cleverer of the two,' as they turned up the lane to the Vicarage, to dress for dinner—and Madame Dufour.

Exactly at the half-hour she came; lovelier, more entrancing than ever, thought Walter, as he flew into the hall to receive her. He brought her into the room, leaning on his arm, his poor foolish heart bounding with pride and joy. Kate and his as yet unannulled engagement with her were alike forgotten, as he led his queen, his saint, his idol, to his mother; and it was with difficulty that he prevented himself from saying out before them all, 'Mother, take her to your heart; she is your daughter!'

He did, however, hold his peace, and only Kate read him clearly, and shrugged her shoulders over the words.

Graceful and soft were the few sentences said, in her slow, half-lisping voice, by the fair-faced stranger to Mrs. Drummond, who

received them awkwardly, half-timidly, as if conscious of the storm that was brewing. And then she turned to the Vicar, and made the old man's eyes sparkle with the caressing charm she threw into such an ordinary salutation as that of a guest to her host on entering. To Kate she bowed with a pretty little air of triumph, and glanced hastily at the back of the gentleman from London, standing slightly apart and in the shadow.

'I think there is some one here who knows you,' then said Kate Hyslop, slowly. 'Mr. Plumstead, you know this lady, I think?'

The gentleman from London turned quickly round.

'An unexpected meeting, Miss Clara Bell,' he said with a cruel laugh, and tapped her expressively on her shoulder.

One fleeting spasm of fear and agony transfigured her loveliness to horror as he spoke—a wild, terrified, hunted look; just the failing of a moment—and then the candid blue eyes looked up straight into his, the sweet, small mouth quivered into its usual half-shy, half-plaintive smile, the graceful body swept a long, low courtesy, and the silvery voice said smoothly, 'You are under some mistake, sir. My name is Madame Dufour—Caroline Dufour—and I have not the honour to know you.'

'Game to the last, I see!' laughed Mr. Plumstead coarsely. 'But the day of reckoning is come, my lady, and your fine airs go for nothing. You have been wanted for some time, you know, for that little mistake you made about young Charlie Lawson's name to that cheque you presented. By the look of things, I'm afraid we shan't get much out of the fire there,' he added, in a kind of aside; 'and now I've found you, I don't mean to let you go again, I promise you. You have no right to complain; you have

had a pretty long innings, all things considered.'

'Walter! kill him!' shrieked Madame Dufour, turning wildly to her young lover. She had no need to urge him. Already his hands were twisted in the neckcloth of the detective, when, quick as thought, Mr. Plumstead drew a truncheon from his pocket, and gave the boy a blow that rendered further interference from him impossible.

'My boy! my boy! You have killed him!' cried the miserable woman, flinging herself on her knees beside him. 'Walter! look up! speak to me! Brave, good, innocent boy, speak to me once again!' she kept on repeating, while sobs without tears—those terrible sobs of fear mingled with anguish—shook her whole frame, as she crouched close to the pale face, kissing it wildly.

'Insolent! abandoned!' said Kate in deep tones, striking her hands from Walter's face. 'Your place is not there.'

'Ah! but I loved him!' pleaded Madame Dufour with unconscious pathos. 'Whatever I may be, I loved him!'

'Take her away,' said Kate sternly. 'She has stood between us long enough.'

'They shall not take me!' she screamed; but Mr. Plumstead bent over her quickly; and, before she well knew that he had taken her hands in his, he had slipped on a pair of handcuffs, and had her at his mercy.

'Loosen his cravat, throw water in his face, and keep him quiet when he recovers; and don't fret, madam,' to the poor mother who was weeping violently on the other side, said the detective, as he prepared to pass out, leaving them with the boy lying as if dead on the floor with no more apparent concern than if he had knocked over a rabbit. It was all in the

way of his profession—merely a unit in his averages—and he knew he had not killed him.

'Now, then, my beauty,' he laughed, turning to the poor wretch alternately cowering and raving in his grasp, 'to your house, if you please; and then we will get our little business settled.'

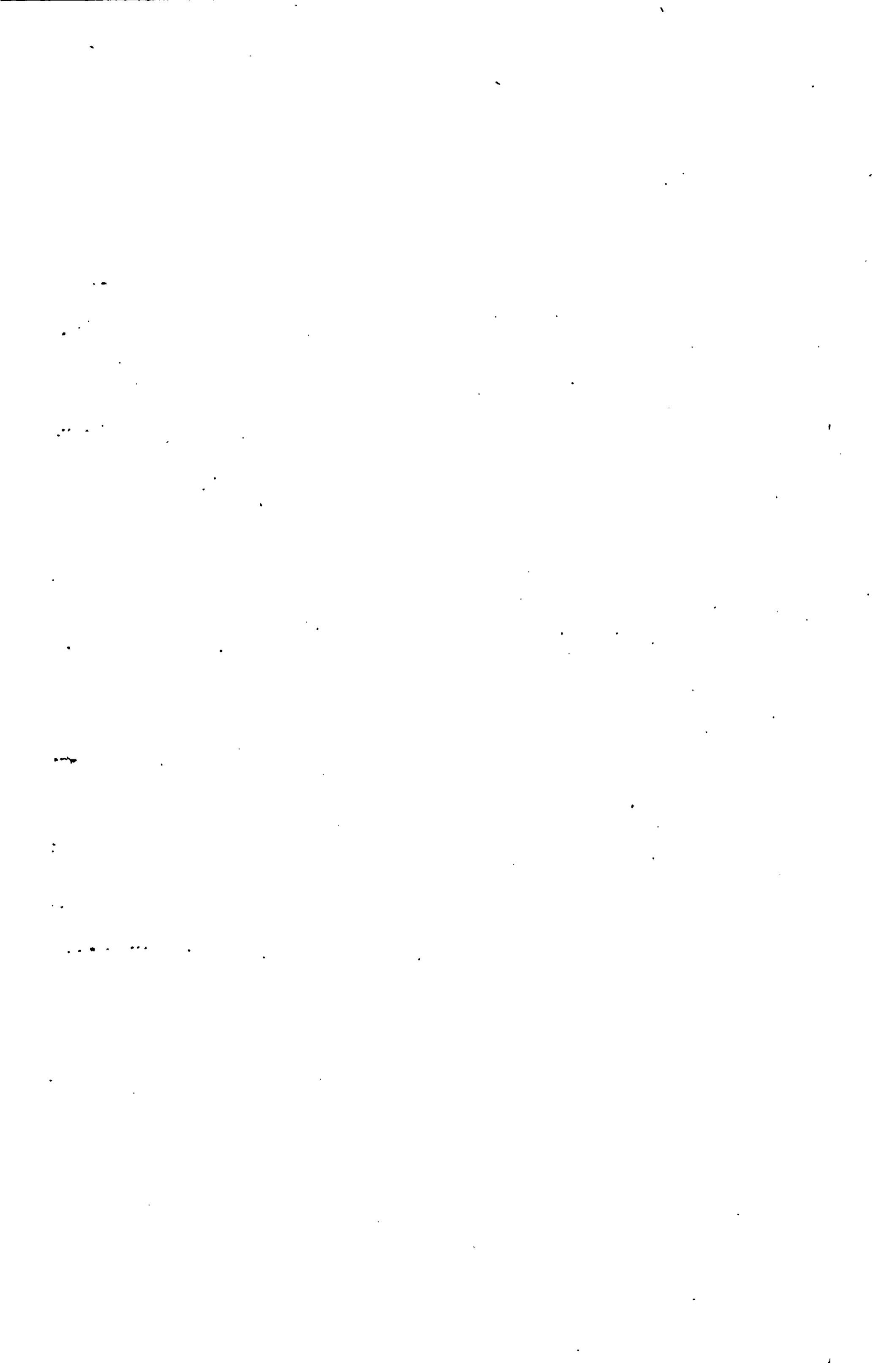
So he passed out through the village, so far consenting to appearances as to cover with a shawl the golden head that had so lately borne itself in triumph, and which was now so bitterly abased, and to conceal the cruel handcuffs that shone among the bracelets on her wrists. She was a prize worth taking, and he was pleased with his day's work.

Years passed, and Kate Hyslop, for all her money and unrelaxing determination to marry Walter, was Kate Hyslop still, and the terror of Hinton society, which she ruled with a rod of iron, and kept in the way of virtue by a severity that knew no moment of weakness, and a vigilance that never relaxed. And Walter Drummond, a sad, grave man, prematurely old, and always bearing that heartbreak of his about him, was living in London in an isolated, miserable fashion enough, seeming to have little to do with life any way, and to have parted for ever with happiness and hope. His father and mother were dead, and he had made no new friends. The only interest he took in anything was in prisons and reformatories. These he visited constantly; constantly, too, wandered about the lower haunts of poverty and vice; or, suddenly changing his method, he would roam about the park and the fashionable squares, always searching, always hoping, and ever pursuing what he never overtook. His search became a kind of monomania with him; but he never saw again the woman he

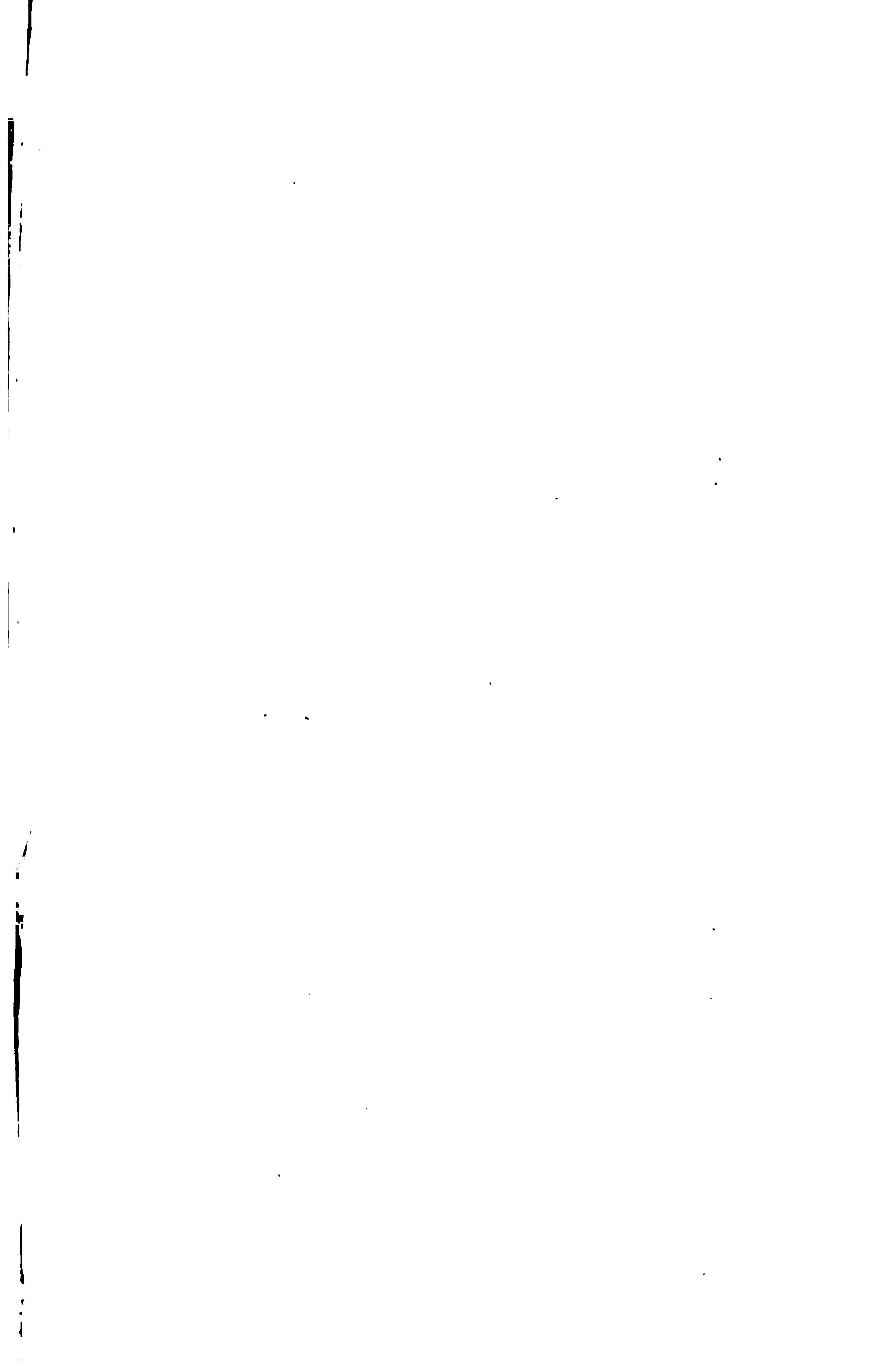
sought, though day by day he said to himself—now the moment had surely come, he would find her to-day; and when he had found her, he would take her to his heart lovingly, reverently, as of old, and in his love he would cleanse her of her stains. He never thought how time would have treated her. He looked for the golden hair, the fair flower-face, the sweet, shy smile of the early days; and once, when he gave a grey-haired, haggard, broken-down beggar-woman half-a-crown in the street, he did not know why she touched his heart so sadly, or why she woke a chord that vibrated in remembrance, but that had no echo in recognition.

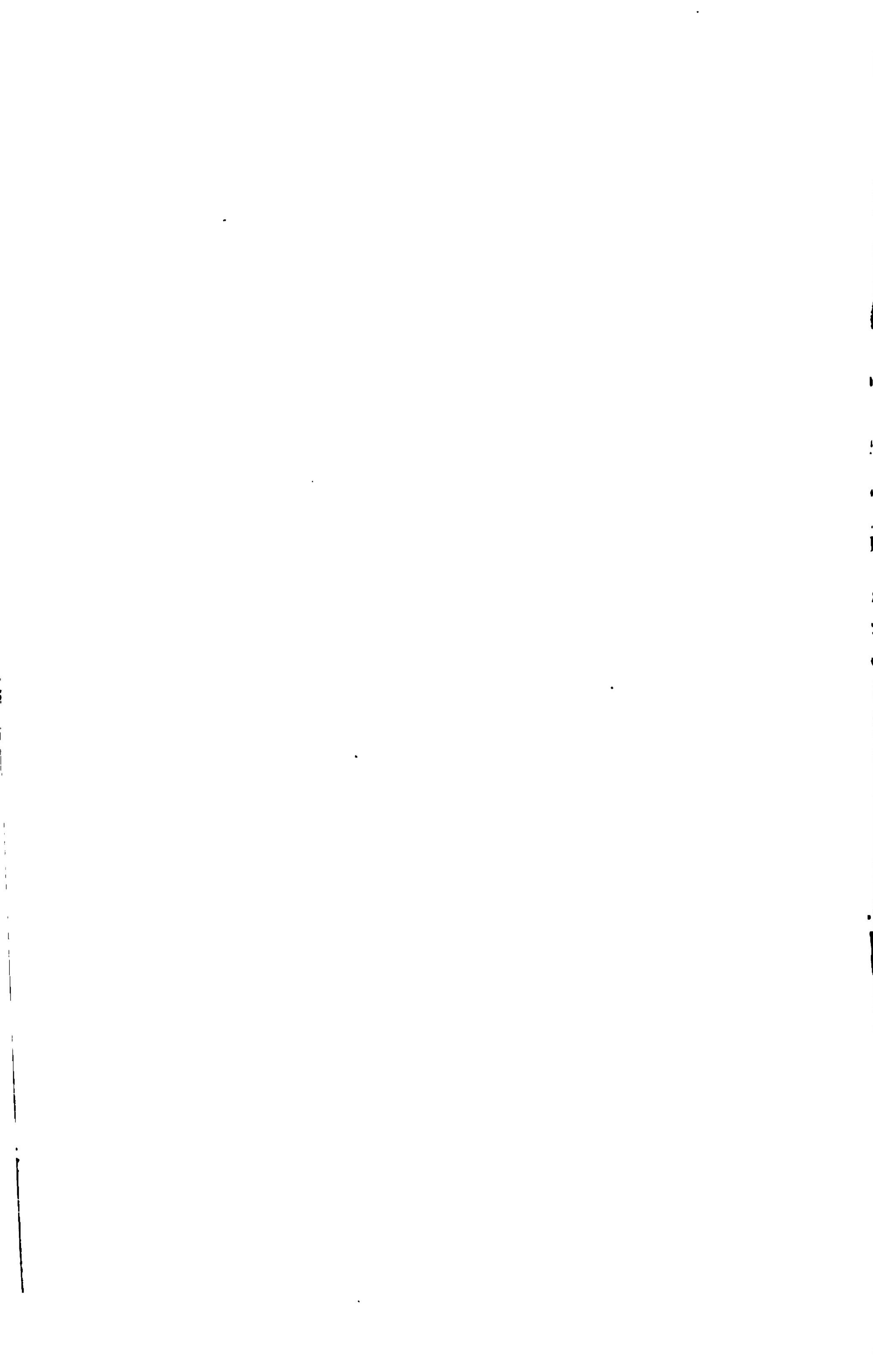
At last, one bitter winter's night, he died. He had wandered restlessly all the day, feeling so near and yet so far off, as if her form was walking with him side by side, step for step, as he paced the long streets for hours; but he could not see her face, nor touch her hand, nor hear her voice. When the night fell he crept back to his miserable home, once more disappointed and his mission unfulfilled. His heart broke at last; and when they came to rouse him in the morning, he was dead.

As they laid the poor worn body straight and fair for its last rest, they found suspended round his neck a locket in which was a long tress of golden hair, a date, a monogram, and 'For ever,' underneath. And when a wretched beggar-woman died of drink and privation in a police-cell, that same winter, they found on her, too, wrapped in a worn bit of paper that had once been pink and stamped in gold, a short, crisp, chestnut curl, and 'Walter,' with the same date as his written within; while a trembling hand, of evidently later days, had scrawled in unsteady characters across, 'My only real love. God bless him!'



Drawn by J. McIntyre.]





S N O W.

SOFT in the keen clear morning
 Gleams the untrodden snow,
 Its diamond-crystals sparkle
 Before me as I go :

Like light on far hills it lieth,
 In vale and on level lea
 It hath flung, a fairy artist,
 Frost jewels o'er spray and tree.

The leaves of a silvery foliage
 Are thick in the branching pines,
 And the bars of the village steeple
 Stand out in clear white lines ;

And on each little mound in the churchyard,
 Where the children gently sleep,
 A stainless cushion of ermine
 It resteth smooth and deep :

Pure o'er the pure : but yonder,
 O'er ruin, and blight, and decay,
 It hath fallen, a merciful Presence,
 And buried them softly away.

O clean cold Snow, thou liest
 So chaste o'er the dross and the slime,
 We greet thee a tender token
 For the sacred Christmas time,—

A symbol of Heavenly Affection,
 That yearns, as with loving wings,
 To hide the pollutions which sully
 The face of all human things.

For away in yon murky city,
 In a maze of street and wall,
 The spotless flakes down-dropping,
 With a silent cleansing fall.

They fall with a hastening pity
 On the foul and filthy lane,
 And loathsome court and alley,
 Corruption's rot and stain ;

And the noisome blots of squalor
 'Neath their gentle touch grow bright,
 And the dens of crime and contagion
 Seem to gather a long-lost light.

O Snow, in dark days thou comest,
 Meet sign of the Christ above,
 Who shall hide all the world's imperfections
 'Neath the white robe of His love.

OUR PHILOSOPHERS.

III.

THERE is now before us a work which many will regard with peculiar interest, and not without a touch of sorrowful regret. Perhaps we need hardly say that we mean Mr. Grote's posthumous work on Aristotle. Aristotle was the intellectual Greek, of all others, with whom Mr. Grote had the most affinity. He should have made sure of Aristotle before he had written his thick tomes on 'Plato, and the other Companions of Socrates.' The subject which he would have illustrated in his best way would have been the political philosophy of ancient Hellas. The two books of Aristotle which Mr. Grote had most constantly in hand, and which received his ripest thoughts, were the 'Ethics' and the 'Politics.' The literature of the 'Ethics' is so extensive, that we think we could be reconciled to the loss even of Mr. Grote's observations. But with the 'Politics' it was very different. This was the one subject beyond all others which connected Mr. Grote's philosophy with the great History. Of the 'Politics' we have not a single syllable, any more than we have of the 'Ethics.' This fact reads almost like a satire on the vanity of human hopes and wishes. Mr. Grote's lost work will be as much regretted as Aristotle's own lost writings—as any of the manuscripts which perished in the famous damp cellar, where they were kept two hundred years. What Mr. Grote has actually left us is dry and repellent to a degree. The general reader will glance at the pleasant life of Aristotle at the beginning of the first volume, at the interesting account of the Stoics and Epicureans at the end

of the second volume—but beyond that he is not likely to advance far into the interior. Aristotle's politics are a yawning gap; for his natural science, we must go to Mr. Lewes—so far as Mr. Lewes is able to supply us—and as for his formal logic, a very limited audience will listen to Mr. Grote. Yet, after all, for his own esoteric school, this will be a noble legacy left by Mr. Grote to his disciples. He has a great spite against parsons, and has shown it in rather an amusing way in the conditions of his bequest to the University of London; yet we believe that the parsons—in whose hands three-fourths of the education of the country is concentrated—will recommend his works, including these massive and splendid posthumous fragments, as among the choicest instruments of intellectual culture.

It is in this work that the predominant philosophical bias of Mr. Grote is chiefly seen. Let the reader look at his Annotation—the annotation of a work is always desultory and amusing reading—and it will be seen how cordially his sympathies were with Mr. Mill, and how cordially he can split a lance with Sir William Hamilton. He attacks Hamilton in his Notes, and returns to the charge in an Appendix. Mr. Grote sympathises so much with Mr. Bain—whose 'Theory of Conscience' we discussed in our last paper—that he prepared a section of these volumes as a contribution to the well-known work on the 'Senses and the Intellect.' Nothing is more remarkable, or, indeed, a more remarkable evidence of the immortal energy of man's power, than the way in which Mr. Grote, at the age of seventy,

with failing powers, and increasing demands upon his time, sat down to a work which might well have taxed the resources of a younger life. We wonder what the German philologist—who regretted that he had not early in life concentrated all his powers on the dative case—would have thought of the Englishman's intrepidity. We find Mr. Grote, at his great age, writing to say how much his mind had opened on some Aristotelian subjects—chiefly in relation to the psychology of Aristotle and his influence on mediæval times. We trust there is a fair hope of a biography of Mr. Grote appearing, which will, doubtless, make us regret that so much time should have been given to the Ballot, which might have elucidated the full development of Hellenic speculation.

It would be extremely interesting to know something of the ways and lives of our philosophers, that we might see how they worked out their philosophy in the discipline of their lives, and observe how outward circumstances affected their ways of thinking. This is the value of the biographical method of treating the history of philosophy. Goethe kept out of all suffering, abdicating any chance of relieving it, because he found that the spectacle of suffering annoyed and unhinged him; and this is in striking accordance with Goethe's scheme and philosophy of life, even as set forth by his sympathetic exponent, Mr. Lewes. Sir Isaac Newton got into parliament, and wanted state employment; and a great authority has declared, that if this had not been the case, mathematical science might have been put forward a whole century. Some great statesmen have been philosophers; but if they had not been statesmen, they would have been greater phi-

losophers still. As a general rule, we do not believe that our philosophers are at all defective in the art of managing their bodies and minds. In the life of Comte, the great influence of Madame Matilde des Vaux is especially to be noted. Like Lord Grey, M. Comte did not care for the newspapers; in fact, he made a rule of never reading periodical publications. He thought it injured his mental health—the *hygiène cérébrale*. In his latter years he was wild on the subject of mental health, and declared that all maladies were one and the same disease—the disturbance or destruction of *l'unité cérébrale*. We think M. Comte is certainly so far right, that people dissipate their minds over newspaper paragraphs and details, and address themselves too little to abstract considerations and broad general views.

No life is more curiously simple than Kant's. In the great modern quarrel of the philosophers, Kant is to Hamilton what Comte is to Mill. He was a poor man, but avoided all debt, and so became comparatively rich. He was a man of weak constitution, but he watched and doctored himself, and so became comparatively strong. 'His uninterrupted health,' writes the 'Saturday,' 'obtained by rules based on his own experience, was a carefully-executed work of art.' He moved so completely in his groove that the slightest departure from it caused him extreme misery. The prisoners in the gaol sang too loud; he used all his influence to abate the nuisance. A cock used to crow too loud, and he changed his residence. He used to gaze on a distant object, that he might concentrate his thoughts; some poplars grew tall enough to hide it, and he was miserable until their owner good-naturedly lopped them. The great Transcendentalist had his ideas of comfort, which un-

doubtedly prolonged his days. He sat down to a one o'clock dinner, but he sat over it for three hours. His palate was exquisite, and he was a profound judge of cookery. Then, for years together, he used to go off to the house of his friend Green, the Englishman. 'Entering the sitting-room, he found Green asleep in an arm-chair, took his seat beside him, and went to sleep likewise. Then Ruffman, a bank director, who also belonged to the clique, entered, and followed the example before him; and all remained sleeping till the arrival at the appointed time of Motherby, another friend, whose business it was to awake them. Conversation now began and continued till seven o'clock, when the party broke up. So rigidly was this rule observed that the remark was often heard, "It can't be seven o'clock yet: Professor Kant has not gone by." The future historian of the philosophy of the nineteenth century will be glad of any similar touches respecting the lives of our great contemporary psychologists.

'And of what use is philosophy?' it may be asked. We understand the uses of natural philosophy, and even of such a practical philosophy as political economy; but no more. It is not enough merely to affirm that it is not 'hard and crabbed,' but 'musical as is Apollo's lute.' What is the use of mere speculation? Most of our readers remember Lord Macaulay's brilliant discussion of the Baconian system, and hold that the philosophy of fruit is better than that of thorns, of works, than words. We may agree with him as a general truth and yet be disinclined to discredit altogether speculative philosophy. Lord Macaulay, like Dean Stanley—the writer who most resembles him in purity of language and picturesqueness of style—has a keen mental vision of the painting,

the rhetoric, the eloquence of a subject, with a singular incapacity to go into the heart of things. There is a direct and immense good in intellectual discussion, even although it is barren of direct positive results. It affords very keen mental discipline. That large proportion of the Platonic Dialogues which are called 'Dialogues of Search or Negation,' are examples of this; and their value is enforced and illustrated by the two great modern exponents of Plato, Mr. Grote and Professor Jowett. We will just cite that great authority, Sir William Hamilton. Sir William even distinctly avows his preference for philosophy considered as a gymnastic for the soul, over philosophy considered as a purveyor of available truths: 'The toil, the labour, the pain of philosophizing seemed to him valuable to the individual spirit, apart from any teachable results.'

While we thus urge the great intellectual and educational value of philosophy, we trust we have shown ourselves alive to the immense vagaries and extravagances that have been perpetrated in its name. Let us take an amusing instance of this. Most of our readers will recollect 'Philosopher Chips,' as he is called, the carpenter, Muddle, in Captain Marryat's 'Peter Simple.' Ah, how we envy boyhood the delirious joy of first reading 'Peter Simple!' 'I have been as close to it as possible, sir, I do assure you, although you find fault,' says Chips. 'But 27,672 years ago, you were first lieutenant of this ship, and I was carpenter, although we recollect nothing about it; and 27,672 years hence, we shall both be standing by this boat, talking about the repairs as we are now.' What we have laughed at as the rollicking invention of the gayest-spirited of sea

novelists appears, however, to be the sober speculation of some of our philosophers. What was called 'Plato's Year,' appears to have been some kind of foreshadowing of it; but this odd notion is connected with physical speculations. M. Comte looked out, indeed, for an illimitable expansion of the destinies of the human race, but still he thought that the life of humanity could not go on for ever: that from advance we should come to equilibrium, and from equilibrium to decay. Science speculates on the collapse or winding down of the solar system; as we have seen Sir William Thomson discuss the sun burning up its materials, and, beyond that, of all stellar systems running together into indistinguishable ruin at the last. Then once more the nebula will whirl, star and system be renewed, and history will be repeated once more in an inevitable chain of causation. 'Thus is introduced into the cosmological conception,' says Professor Masson, 'the ultimate notion or imagination of a vast periodicity. The universe is a recurring beat or pulsation. It is a rhythm of alternate evolution and involution, expansion and contraction. It is the opening and shutting of a hand. It is a Nothing ever manifesting itself as a Something, and a Something ever returning into a Nothing.' Or you put it as Vergil does (observe the new spelling)—

'Alter erit tum Tiphys, et altera quæ
vehat Argo
Delectos heroas.'

But I prefer Philosopher Chips' simple, unadorned, definite calculation, that it will all come over again in twenty-seven thousand odd years.

We like our philosophers even better in such airy speculations than when they touch on practical matters, from which abstract

thought is never far away. For instance, our philosophers by no means leave alone questions relating to the sexes. They even discuss what Sydney Smith overheard the young Scotch couple do while dancing—'love in the abstract. M. Comte himself is very strict on the irrevocability of the marriage tie, and the due subjection of women. Mr. Mill, as is well known, takes a view of much greater freedom. 'Everything leads us to believe,' he says, 'that the power (i.e. of divorce) if granted elsewhere would in general be used only for its legitimate purpose—for enabling those who, by a blameless or excusable mistake, have lost their first throw for domestic happiness, to free themselves (with due regard for all interests concerned) from the burthensome yoke, and try, under more favourable auspices, another chance.' Much would depend upon what Mr. Mill might call 'due regard for all interests concerned.' If he means the procuring a pecuniary support for the discarded wife and her children, then the luxury of divorce will only be permissible for the wealthier classes. Mr. Alexander Bain is quite deep on this question of love: 'Mere liking attends only to itself, and does not necessarily imply devotion to another self. There is a form of love extremely common, whereby people court other persons merely for their own pleasure, and no longer, just as they live in a house so long as they find it agreeable, and quit it when that ceases to be the case. This is all that would arise out of mere tender feeling, considered as the result of a charm inspired by engaging qualities. Far from being a disinterested affection, nothing is more purely and strictly interested than such a case.' Dr. Johnson—who was decidedly a philosopher in his way—used to wish that

there should be another Marriage Service for common people: by which he meant those people who had not such high aspirations as other people, and who were indifferent, or careless, or worldly. It is curious also to observe how some modern philosophers—Comte, for instance—revive the celebrated speculations of Plato, which have certainly done their share of mischief in the world. The very worst of all such speculations—to which, indeed, we must decline to give currency—are to be found in the profoundly immoral views of Mr. Lecky. Mr. John Morley, in his book on Burke, and other writings, gives an example very sedulously to be deprecated and avoided. The earnestness and thoroughness with which he states his views are indeed worthy of admiration; but he is bigoted and intolerant to the last degree to those who are opposed to him in philosophy and politics. One of the Bishop of Peterborough's most successful efforts was in reply to a paper in which Mr. Morley spoke of the clergy as a *sinister black-coated army*. Bishop Magee accused such language of snobbery, and said that the writer was a true flunkie, who ought to appear in canary-coloured continuations.

It is interesting to observe how the pictorial historians—in contrast to the philosophical and speculative historians—practically decline such considerations as are ever busy in the minds of such men as Buckle and Lecky. Almost the initial question in real historical inquiry is, whether man was developed from rude beginnings to his present state, or whether even the aboriginal Tasmanian, whose intellectual powers do not enable him to count his five fingers, belongs to the *race Adamique*. It is at this point that history becomes connected with physical science

and theology. Mr. Froude actually declines to inquire whether man came from the apes or the angels. He presents facts, and declines theories. In fact his more serious ideas on those ideas are to be found rather in his fables than in his history; which we suspect he threw up pretty much in disgust, very like his kinsman Mr. Kingsley, who found out that all men are liars, and historians especially. In Mr. Froude's pretty fable or *apologue of the Cat*, we find some of the fundamental difficulties of speculation picturesquely set forth, and very decidedly laughed at. The animals talk as wisely as Reynard the Fox.

“ “ Dog, what do you make of it all ? ”

‘ The dog faintly opened his languid eyes, looked sleepily at the cat for a moment, and dropped them again.

“ “ Dog ! ” she said, “ I want to talk to you ; don't go to sleep. Can't you answer a civil question ? ”

“ “ Don't bother me,” said the Dog ; “ I am tired. I stood on my hind legs ten minutes this morning, before I could get my breakfast, and it didn't agree with me.”

“ “ Who told you to do it ? ” said the Cat.

“ “ Why, the lady I have to take care of me,” said the Dog.

“ “ Do you feel any better for it, Dog, after you have been standing on your legs ? ” asked she.

“ “ Haven't I told you, you stupid Cat, that it hasn't agreed with me ? Let me go to sleep, and don't plague me.”

“ “ But I mean,” persisted the Cat, “ do you feel improved, as the men call it ? They tell their children that if they do what they are told, they will improve, and grow great and good. Do you feel good and great ? ”

“ “ What do I know ? ” said the

Dog. "I eat my breakfast, and am happy. Let me alone."

"Do you never think, O Dog without a soul? Do you never wonder what dogs are, and what this world is?"

The dog stretched himself and rolled his eyes lazily round the room. "I conceive," he said, "that the world is for dogs, and men and women are put into it to take care of dogs; women to take care of little dogs, like me, and men for big dogs, like those in the yard: and cats," he continued, "are to know their places, and not be troublesome."

"They beat you sometimes," said the Cat. "Why do they do that? They never beat me."

"If they neglect their places, and beat me," snarled the Dog, "I bite them, and they don't do it again. I should like to bite you too, you nasty Cat: you have woke me up."

"There may be truth in what you say," said the Cat, calmly; "but I think your view is limited."

Our readers may, if they like, place a figurative or allegorical interpretation on this dialogue; and there is, perhaps, a still deeper searching into the heart of mysteries in the dialogue with the Owl, who is as clever as the famous Owlet of Owlstone Edge.

"From the beginning," said the Owl, "our race have been considering which first existed—the owl or the egg. The owl comes from the egg, but likewise the egg from the owl."

"Mercy!" said the Cat.

"From sunrise to sunset I ponder on it, O Cat! When I reflect on the beauty of the complete owl, I think that must have been first, as the cause is greater than the effect. When I remember my own childhood, I incline the other way."

"Well, but how are we to find out?" said the Cat.

"Find out!" said the Owl. "We can never find out. The beauty of the question is that its solution is impossible. What would become of all our delightful reasonings, O unwise Cat, if we were so unhappy as to know?"

"But what in the world is the good of thinking about it, if you can't, O Owl?"

"My child, that is a foolish question. It is good in order that the thoughts on those things may stimulate wonder. It is in wonder that the Owl is great."

But the animals have never been better trotted out for the enlightenment and edification of philosophers than by Mr. Stone, in his delightful new volume, 'The Knight of Intercession, &c.' Mr. Stone attained a sudden popularity as the author of the 'Thanksgiving Hymn' sung at St. Paul's. There is such a thing as the philosophy of religion, which in its tenderest and highest flights is exhibited in this remarkable volume. In common with all true poets, Mr. Stone has a strong *Margites* element, and he has written some lines entitled 'The Soliloquy of a Rationalistic Chicken,' suggested by the absurd picture of a newly-hatched chicken contemplating the fragments of its native shell, from which we take a few excerpts:—

'Now let me see;

First, I would know how did I get in there?

Then where was I of yore?

Besides, why didn't I get out before?

Bless me!

Here are three puzzles (out of twenty more),

Enough to give me pip upon the brain!

But let me think again.

How do I know I ever was inside?

Now I reflect, it is, I do maintain,

Less than my reason, and beneath my pride,

To think that I could dwell

In such a paltry, miserable cell

As that old shell.

Of course I couldn't! How could I
have lain,
Body and beak and feathers, legs and
wings,
And my deep heart's sublime imagin-
inga,
In there?
Where did I come from, then? Ah,
where indeed?
This is a riddle monstrous hard to read.
I have it! Why, of course,
All things are moulded by some plastic
force
Out of some atoms somewhere up in
space,
Fortuitously concurrent anyhow.
There now!
That's plain as is the beak upon my face.
What's that I hear?
My mother cackling at me? Just her
way,
So prejudiced and ignorant, I say;
So far behind the wisdom of the day.'

But we have sufficiently mixed the gay with the grave, the lively with the severe. We have already spoken of the vast influence of Comte in moulding so much of the popular philosophy of the present day. French thought is now influencing English thought in much the same way as English thought influenced French thought at the era of the French Revolution. This last influence was developed in a twofold way. On the philosophical side it reproduced the sensational philosophy of John Locke in the materialistic speculations of Condillac and his school, and generally in the Encyclopædistes. On the political side, it imported into France those republican notions and the doctrine of resistance to regal power which had first been imported into America by the Puritans, and finally blazed forth in the War of Independence. Republican France had, in one respect, an Anglophobia, and in another respect an Anglomania. Above all, the Americans were the rage in Paris, and fine ladies and gentlemen, whilst discussing republicanism and materialism in the salons, thought these were merely specu-

lative questions, with which the practical life of the times was not really concerned. We have endeavoured to point out that speculative opinions are never unfruitful, and ultimately produce the most sweeping and energetic action. Gibbon thought his eighteenth century a very tame one, and wondered whence should come the Goths and Huns that should disturb its tranquillity. He little thought that his own eighteenth century was to end with an explosion. That philosophical influence which France once borrowed from England is now being derived by England from France. Comtism exhibits the latest and most important development of European thought. Comte himself was the direct produce of the philosophical thought of the eighteenth century, derived mainly from England. The revolutionists in political thought make no secret that they have vast organic practical ends in view, though they decline to state them with much distinctness. It will be a long time before the thought of the 'Westminster' and 'Fortnightly' Reviews become familiarized to English thought throughout the country. But it will be important to value the influence of this extraordinary man, in order to appreciate the most remarkable intellectual phenomena of our own day.

He has been chiefly popularized in this country by his introduction through Miss Martineau and Mr. Lewes. A great wit has consequently said, 'There is no God, and Miss Martineau is his prophet.' Mr. Lewes, to our mind, marred what was incomparably the best work of biographical philosophy by its undiluted Positivism. Mr. Mill's admirable essay is practically disowned by bitter Comtists. And, as we confess to be greatly influenced by it, our readers had better

consult the searching criticisms that have been applied to this criticism by Mr. Lewes and Dr. Brydges. Comte is a wonderful man. Mr. Mill compares him with Leibnitz, and Descartes, and says that, to speak his whole mind, he thinks him superior to either. Comte is famous for his scientific method and for his encyclopaedic knowledge. He proceeds in a regular series according to a scale, ascending in complexity from mathematics to his great science of society or social physics, giving each science its proper method, and vigorously defining the different order of the phenomena. ‘The connection between the sciences thus arranged is that the laws of each preceding order of phenomena are operative in that which succeeds, but in combination with a new order of laws the study of which constitutes the advanced science. As might be supposed, the sciences have historically developed themselves in accordance with this arrangement, the simpler and more general first, the more complex and special afterwards. Thus we obtain not only a lucid and rational classification, but a logical genealogy and an historical law of evolution, forming a sure basis for education and a luminous indicator of future progress.’ This philosophy, because he rigorously confines it to what can be proved —because he holds that all our knowledge can only be of the co-existences and successions of phenomena—M. Comte calls the *positive philosophy*, though Mr. Mill has made an unsuccessful attempt to alter the nomenclature, and call it the experimental or the phenomenal.

Nothing is more beautiful than M. Comte’s morality, or more dreary than his religion. The old-fashioned rule is not enough for him, that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. He thinks we ought to

love him a great deal better. This is his famous altruism, the golden rule—*vivre pour autrui*. We must love our neighbour with all our heart and soul, but it is not permitted to love and cherish our own personal flesh. A man must almost exhibit the severity of a De Rancé towards himself. But, while the personal passions are starved and withered, the social feelings are to be cultivated to the highest point of intensity. From this exception —which is, in fact, the noblest of ideas in an exaggerated and overcharged shape—arose Comte’s conception of the *Grand Etre*. Whether there be or whether there be not a God, was a point which Comte thought it unnecessary to discuss. It was not, to his mind, a question susceptible of direct demonstration, and therefore he left it alone. But the habits of mankind itself—humanity stretching infinitely back and illimitably forward—those who have served us, and whom we may gratefully love in the historical past, and those who shall succeed us and stand upon a higher life, through the scaffoldings which we ourselves have raised—the collective human race in its past, present, and future: this seemed to him an object worthy of a religious feeling, a source of emotion, a motive to conduct. He says, with wonderful truth and beauty: ‘The highest minds, even now, live in thought with the great dead, far more than with the living; and next to the dead, with those ideal human beings yet to come, whom they are never destined to see.’ How M. Comte pushed this idea to absolute extravagance, organized an actual religious *cultus* of great men, to the scandal of his more intellectual disciples, glorified his ideal humanity in a female form, something as the Goddess of Reason was set up at the Revolution, is to show the inherent weaknesses and defects of one of the most original

and brilliant of thinkers, who will for ever occupy a prominent place in the history of opinion. Comte's system is utterly without a God. It may be said, indeed, that he has as much right to be called Theist as Atheist; for he simply declined to examine into the subject, and confined his attention rigidly to the phenomenal world. The obvious criticism on his system is that human mind is so constructed that it flies from the region of fact to abstract thought and religious aspiration, and that these thoughts and aspirations are as real and fertile as any facts of external observation.

The form in which Comtism has been most remarkably developed in this country is in that very important and popular class of our philosophers, namely the historians. Our philosophical historians endeavour to work out a view of looking at history the foundation of which is the sociology of M. Comte. Mr. Mill occupies the last part of his great work on Logic with a discussion of M. Comte's sociology, with which he combines, after a fashion, his own ethology; by which he means the laws that govern the formation of individual and national character. It is from M. Comte and Mr. Mill that Mr. Buckle elaborated his system. You might cut Buckle out of a corner of Mill, and he would not be missed. M. Comte has applied his system of social dynamics in two immortal volumes, which Mr. Mill regards as his greatest achievement, except, perhaps, his review of the sciences. One of M. Comte's greatest distinctions is between social statics—society in equilibrium—and social dynamics—society in movement. Mill speaks of the extraordinary merits of this historical analysis, and adds: 'Whoever disbelieves that the philosophy of history can be made a science, should suspend his judg-

ment until he has read these volumes of M. Comte.' The form in which this influence of Comte's is more familiar to the public will be recognised in the question which was keenly discussed some years ago, whether the limits of exact science can be applied to history; respecting which Mr. Kingsley issued one of his remarkable publications. It belongs to that science of sociology which, according to some, Comte elaborated, but according to Mr. Mill, only made possible. Mr. Mill does not hold that the future acts of men and societies can be foreseen, like the phenomena of the heavenly bodies; but he holds that the science of humanity proves that given circumstances have a tendency to alter given characters in ascertainable degrees and directions, and that under given circumstances, given characters will act in a determinate manner. If we come to analyse and disintegrate this language, it really does not come to very much: it is merely formulating that which we know, and act on every day of our lives. Every novelist, in the construction of his story, is simply working out an imaginary concrete from this great philosophical principle.

Mr. Buckle's first volume excited immense attention; in the next there was an immense falling off; and the promised publication of the 'Remains' will be looked for anxiously before his exact place and worth in the literature of historical philosophy can be decided. Mr. Mill has some searching criticism of Mr. Buckle, which would apply, not only to Mr. Buckle, but to one of his more distinguished younger followers, Mr. John Morley. The new historical school follow M. Comte in deriding the idea that kings and conquerors can do with society what they please; but then they fall into the opposite mistake, which M. Comte carefully avoided,

of ascribing everything to general causes and the tendencies of society. ' This is the mistake which pervades the instructive writings of the thinker who in England and in our own times, bore the nearest, though a very remote, resemblance to M. Comte—the lamented Mr. Buckle ; who, had he not been cut off at an early stage of his labours, and before the complete maturity of his powers, would probably have thrown off an error the more to be regretted, as it gives a colour to the prejudice which regards the doctrine of the invariability of natural laws as identical with fatalism. Mr. Buckle also fell into another mistake, which M. Comte avoided, that of regarding the intellectual as the only progressive element in war, and the moral as too much the same at all times to affect even the annual average of crime.' This last principle seemed to introduce a kind of fatalism into the phenomena of society which greatly upset the minds of some people, and caused considerable discussion.

And what, after all, is it that the Positive Philosophy can do for us ? If our philosophers can achieve their systems, what will their systems achieve ? Let us ask the disciples of M. Comte what the Science of Humanity will do ? and let us ask Mr. Mill and his school, what enlightened self-interest on the principles of Utilitarianism will do for us ? It is only dealing with different forms of the same substantial thought. Can we suppose that at any great crisis of being, in the presence of some terrible temptation, some overwrought emotion, the finely-constructed rules of philosophy will not burst asunder as withes ? Take a man who is the victim of some devastating bad habit, such as the lust of drink. Will such a man be able to conquer his cravings by the fine reflection that his habits are opposed to the

general interests and to the progress of society ? He knows that his acts are injurious to his own character, health, intellect, and his soul—on the favourable hypothesis that he supposes that he has a soul—and yet he will not abandon the habit. You must call in the powerful and abiding influences of motives drawn from a sphere beyond this world, if ever in this world you expect generous impulse and unwavering rectitude. The more prosperous a philosophy fertile in fruits makes us all, the greater amount of culture, refinement, and leisure it obtains for us —the more will men refuse to be bound by the limits of what is cognizable only by sense and experience ; and, in spite of having emerged into a scientific age, the problems of metaphysics and theology will constantly recur to the mind. If men are debarred from these, they will probably fall victims to the most debased forms of modern spiritualism—summoning the shades of Milton and Shakespeare, to talk twaddle of which their most empty-headed commentators would have been incapable. Above all, the greatest aspirations of the human soul would be unsanctioned, its greatest sorrows unconsoled. We should see men of intellect, at those times when as the physical organization decays, the mind is clearest and most matured, snatch at the last sands of time as if they were sands of gold, and accuse the fates who had given length of days to the "many-wintered crow," and refused it to the master and masterpiece of creation.' What blankness in the prospect beyond, with no warm love, no gracious voices, no beloved forms ! What torture and despondency to those who abandon themselves to annihilation, or at least do not profess to give a single guess for the future of themselves or of those they love !

CARDS OF INVITATION.

BY THOSE WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THEM.

II.—A LITTLE LOOK AT THE CLUBS.

I WAS sorry to read, my dear Joseph, the cynical anathema contained in your last interesting letter upon Christmas hospitalities in general, and Christmas visits in particular—sorry, but not reproachful; for I know that you are altogether too genuine a youth to lend yourself to the cant of that superfine social criticism, which affects to despise anniversaries, for no other reason than that they are institutions. As your dear father used to observe, contempt for Christmas generally implies on the part of the person expressing it incipient baldness as to his head, and a score of well-substantiated misgivings as to the condition of his banker's book. Still, to be perfectly frank, even though I should thus seem to incur one or both of these imputations, I may tell you that I am far from fanatically attached to Christmas myself—that is, socially considered; but, my boy, rest assured that if Christmas visits to one's dear friends are apt to become the organized nuisances of British hospitality, they are as nothing, in this respect, to the visits paid in the course, say of the three weeks which immediately succeed the great festival of our faith. I am staying, as you will see, with Clipperley, in his new house, 99, Petersham Square, Pim—— I beg Mr. Clipperley's pardon, South Belgravia. Clipperley is an excellent fellow, and ever since—more years ago now than I care to remember—he 'tunded' me at Winchester with such just severity for the hideous offence I committed in slightly burning one corner of his toast at

breakfast, I have not ceased to entertain for him a respectful affection of the tenderest nature. Poor Clipperley! In the old days I remember hearing him called a bully at Winchester, and intolerably overbearing at Oxford; but years, the force of circumstances, and Mrs. Clipperley combined, have done a good deal towards 'taking it out' of our friend. Not that I would for a moment insinuate that Mrs. Clipperley is otherwise than angelic, but the financial aftertaste of Christmas may be at times too much for the most patient of husbands and the most exemplary of wives. As we all know, a fragmentary flavour of bitterness gives a relish to our wine; but for my part—and I think I may answer for Clipperley—that same *amari aliquid*, as an accompaniment to claret, is better when it comes in the shape of olives than of unpaid bills. The new invention of the late evening post in London is responsible for a whole world of domestic misery and of conjugal broils. Having exhausted the very dismal round of the theatres, the household in Petersham Square—by which I mean Mrs. Clipperley, Mr. Clipperley, and 'the present writer'—have been passing several of their evenings in a state of domestic privacy and seclusion. We might have been tolerably happy but for this abominable post, which, as surely as we have heard its knock reverberating at our doors, has deluged us with missives that, once opened, have caused all seasonable mirth to take wings immediately and fly away. Bills of whose existence poor Clipperley had never dreamed,

or which Mrs. Clipperley had entirely forgotten, have introduced themselves into the aperture of the Clipperley letter-box, and have thence been conveyed into the dining-room, just as we were commencing to settle down into that vein of *Auld Lang Syne* which a bottle of Lafitte is calculated to superinduce. Sometimes these unwelcome documents have first fallen into Mrs. Clipperley's hands, and then, if they related exclusively to the expenditure of Mr. Clipperley, we have been viewed in the drawing-room with that air of sinister calm which is the certain forerunner of a domestic storm. But why trouble you, my dear Joseph, with these details? I wish to tell you in my present letter of something which will, I hope, interest you more than the perturbed relations which the financial aftertaste of Christmas has at times developed in the Clipperley *ménage*.

My position, I assure you, has been one of extreme difficulty and delicacy. An unwilling witness of the discussions that have occasionally arisen between my host and hostess on subjects bearing a more or less intimate relation with pounds shillings and pence, I have wished at all times to prove my friendship for Clipperley while securing the goodwill and respect of Mrs. Clipperley. Heaven preserve you, my dear Joseph, from ever having to do duty as a species of domestic buffer by the hearth-side of an old friend! the passage through Scylla and Charybdis must be ease and safety in comparison. To speak perfectly frankly with you, I will own that I have felt considerably relieved when, after one of these intervals in the domestic debates held in the drawing-room at Petersham Square, Clipperley has risen and, with the air of a man suddenly inspired

with an exceptionally happy thought, has said,

'Well, George, you must find it dull, old fellow. We've done the theatres; let us go into the Marmion and have a look at the evening papers. My dear, we shall be back in very good time.'

Solvitur ambulando. Thus have I been taken off from the stormy atmosphere of the Clipperley household, and planted in the tranquil region of club life.

'You now see, my good George,' to quote Clipperley's own words to me at such times as these, 'that clubs are even more necessary for Benedicts than for bachelors. They are the true domestic peacemakers; they afford a refuge for the husband in the hour when his need is sorest, and provide him with an excuse for temporarily absenting himself from the wife of his bosom just soon enough to rob the nascent matrimonial tempest of its fury.'

This, I own, was to me a new theory of the utility of clubs; but reflection, my dear Joseph, causes me entirely to acquiesce in its profound truth.

'Laura,' continued our old friend, 'is an admirable wife; but matrimony requires to be supplemented with a club or so, as a kind of refuge in times of doubt, danger, or distress. But here we are at the Marmion. Let us turn in and have a look round.'

The Marmion, my dear Joseph, was not a club entirely new; I was an original member myself; but, as you know, I took to rustinating, and so, as you would say, cut the concern. I wondered, as I entered it, whether I should see the old place as I had formerly known it; whether the same long morocco-clad benches would appear on either side of the lobby—as I have seen them on many an eventful Derby or Ascot eve—

thickly crowded with ingenuous subalterns from Aldershot, varied here and there by the presence of a very disingenuous interloper, who was, however, credited by this company of precocious profligates as a 'deuced good hand, you know, at putting you on a real good thing.' But no, the Marmion has altered. Still did I find its vestibule odorous with the fumes of tobacco-smoke, penetrating, in an irresistible manner, from other regions specially consecrated to the consumption of the weed; and still was the sharp crack which told of soda-and-brandy loud in the land. But the Marmion had decidedly toned down. The warriors from Woolwich, 'full of strange oaths,' but beardless as lambs, do not muster as they did. There was pool going on upstairs, but a single look round acquainted me with the fact that the *personnel* of the players had changed, and changed, I was glad to observe, for the better. My old friend, Mr. Flimsy Sloper and Captain Deuceace, had left; bets were infrequent and inconsiderable. In the card-room, too, I was pleased to notice that the only game played was whist, and that at points which never yet ruined a soul. I can remember the time, my dear Joseph, when, in that same apartment, twenty thousand pounds have changed hands over a certain game which I wont mention, but which I will merely say that it admitted a good deal more of luck than whist. Have you forgotten the story I have told you, of how Charles Ramshackle—long since 'gone over to the majority'—strolled in here one evening with the last five-pound note he had got, or saw a chance of getting, and, after a bottle of Pommery and some devilled prawns, walked up-stairs, and rose that night, or

rather the next morning, a winner of a sum which might have more than got him clear of all his troubles? Instead of the five hundred members to which the Marmion was at first limited, it contains over a thousand: instead of strolling in there about noon, and finding your presence resented by sleepy waiters, who wondered what mischief you could be revolving at that unconscionably early hour, middle-aged and respectable men of business breakfast there, I am credibly informed, habitually, at 9 A.M., and long before midnight has sounded, are wrapt in their beauty slumbers.

In a word, my dear Joseph, the Marmion, which was once rakish, has become respectable. Perhaps it is with clubs as it is with individuals, and they rather grow in popularity than otherwise, even with most virtuous-seeming of mankind, when there attaches to them a slight suspicion of wildness in their young days.

Yet, though the Marmion is virtuous, cakes and ale have not died out of the land, and ginger is still hot i' the mouth. In other words, my dear Joseph, you can get a devilled bone within these erewhile disreputable precincts later by an entire hour than in most other of those joint-stock palaces which have grown up within the last quarter of a century in the neighbourhood of St. James's and Pall Mall. Clipperley, having played a pool, and distinguished himself in a couple of rubbers, suggested a little supper, and after a little supper, he failed to see, even when I represented it to him, the grievous impropriety of a 'little smoking-room.' If you want gossip, the upper chamber consecrated to tobacco at the Marmion is undoubtedly the thing; and if you wish scandal, you might go far-

ther and fare worse. It is curious to notice, *mi Josephé*, how, in these present days, the drama, as a subject of the confidential talk of our gilded youth, has taken precedence even of the turf. True, there is a longish interval of time between January and May, and the horse which may win the Derby or the Guineas is probably not in the betting two months after Christmas. Even this, however, is insufficient to explain the phenomenon which presented itself on that evening, or to tell me why, so far as its conversational echoes were concerned, the smoking-room at the Marmion might have been the green-room at Drury Lane. The senior members of the club—the steady-going half-pay officers, and the shrewdly sedate City men who have rescued the Marmion from the evil one—had cleared off, and the *jeunesse dorée*—don't sneer, Joseph; there was some pinchbeck, I admit—were masters of the situation. I was much attracted by a shrill little voice, which I thought I recognized, giving some remarkably *ex cathedrā* criticisms on a dramatic performance which he had that evening witnessed. It turned out to be little Flipkins. Clipperley knew him, and he joined our group. I had not seen the youngster for some years, but I knew that he was in partnership with his father, a Mincing Lane merchant, with a considerable connection, in the City. What business had Flipkins *fils*, at those unhallowed hours, in the smoking-room of the Marmion? Why was he not an inmate of the domestic *ménage* at Clapham? I was relieved to see that Flipkins was redeemed from all suspicion of an inordinate fondness for strong drinks; for the youth regretted, with much exuberant politeness, when Clipperly was ordering our second

tumbler—‘Scotch whisky, waiter, and water absolutely boiling, if you please’—his inability to tolerate anything more potent than a squeeze of lemon in a glass of soda. ‘Mild and innocent,’ commented Clipperley; ‘but’ (Clipperley always commences to Latinize a little over his second tumbler)

‘Non his juventus orta parentibus
Infecit æquor sanguine Punicum.’

The quotation was lost on Flipkins. Not that he was a stranger to Latin once, but Flipkins has conceived the idea that the only language worth studying is French, and supports himself daily with the hope, that when he dies, his soul, may straightway migrate to Paris, and flutter nightly above the ‘flies’ at the *Variétés*. Meanwhile, as Flip. is condemned to London, he endeavours to get on as best he may with nightly attendances at the different temples of the English drama. Mr. Percy Flipkins has had two years of this, yet he never tires. ‘Hang it all, Clip., my boy,’ he said; ‘I must have excitement—I’m a volatile creature; and as for business, there’s the governor and old Mumps, his confidential clerk, and I can always get a glass of sherry and a chop at lunch-time when I stroll down that way.’ I hope, Joseph, that when you are promoted to the high honour of a desk in your uncle Grigsby’s office, you will not adopt Mr. Percy Flipkins’ solution of the problem of existence. It is astonishing with what speed the hours fly, once midnight has tolled—an observation trite but true. I mildly hint to Clipperley that it is close on two, and that we ought to be off; but Clipperley, who, as I have said, regards club life as a species of conjugal physic, and who entertains very definite notions of what its minimum and maximum

measure ought to be, emphatically replies that where he was he intended for a little time to remain. A stentorian voice declaiming, in the immediate neighbourhood of my left ear, on the wrongs which 'the service' was suffering—the inevitable extinction of *esprit de corps* in the army, the special injury inflicted by Mr. Cardwell upon the highest class of military officers—these remarks, I say, proceeding apparently from a gigantic gentleman with a bald head and whiskers undeniably fine, induced me to ask Clipperley whether we had a field-marshall in our company.

'Field-marshall! why?'

And I gently nodded my head in the direction of the speaker.

'Oh, Timmins, of the War Office—capital fellow. Let me introduce you to him, and I'll lay you five to one that his first observation is that he knew a man of your name once in the 999th. Capital fellow, Timmins, and a thorough soldier, every inch of him—except his legs.'

Clipperley's criticism was severe, but it was correct. Timmins might have been the hero of a hundred fights, if one only listened to his talk and concentrated one's observation upon his whiskers; but when he stood erect—whiskers and talk notwithstanding—it was too plain that Timmins was merely a civilian; for Timmins' legs were weak. I should like, my dear Joseph, to have told you a good deal more about the smoking-room at the Marmion, for it happened the other night to be crowded with characters whom we may fairly consider typical. We were preparing to leave, when Mr. Warbeck Perkin and Mr. Jonas Flute entered and came up to Clipperley, a brother barrister. The names of both these gentlemen are sufficiently familiar to you already.

Their success at the bar has been wonderful, and, depend upon it, Joseph, it has not been disproportionate to their merits. In these days it is ridiculous to speak of success of any sort in language of this kind. Life is one long competitive examination; one's natural foes are the examiners, and if you contrive to defeat these, so much the better for you. It is uncharitable and it is unphilosophical to disparage the qualities which can command conquest. Therefore I don't see—and I told Clipperley so—what point the rivals of Perkin and Flute have made against them when they say that Flute is shallow and Perkin plausible. Very likely; and, if they are, so much the more credit for them. Both of them were beaming when they entered the smoking-room of the Marmion the other night. They had done a long and a remunerative day's work, had dined wisely but not too well at the old Agapemone, had been to the play—it is the particular *métier* of Flute and Perkin to attend the play with as little irregularity as possible—and supped at Evans', where they had met the celebrated Chancery lawyer, Dr. Oxymel. Now, Flute and Perkin shape themselves as nearly as may be after the fashion of the learned doctor. Pale ale disagrees with Flute, and is downright unpalatable to Perkin; but at Evans', Perkin and Flute will drink pale ale as long as it continues to run, because Dr. Oxymel, whose internal economy is that of an ostrich, finds it does not interfere with his intellectual energies, but is rather favourable to their exercise than otherwise. Mr. Perkin and Mr. Flute are admirable conversationalists, in their own opinion. The only thing is, their range of topics is limited. It begins with Flute and ends with Perkin. By this

time, however, Clipperley has come to the end of his cigar, and suggests an adjournment. But the wretch positively—though it is now close on 3 A.M.—hints at visiting a small, very late, and very select company—a club which I will call, for your benefit, my dear Joseph, the Fly-by-Nights (the name is near enough). Now, for the nonce, I feel that I stand *in loco parentis* to Clipperley. I am his guest and I am Mrs. Clipperley's guest, and it is high time for us to be wending our way to the Lares and Penates in Petersham Square. Besides, so far as I am concerned, to quote the stanza of a contemporary versifier—

'When a man is approaching to fifty
He seldom breaks into his nights,
But is apt to grow studiously thrifty
Of violent delights.'

We have broken into our nights, once in a way, and I protest to Clipperley in the strongest manner possible against a continuation of the infringement. Eventually he yields; but he is still grumbling at the curtailment of our nocturnal outing when we throw away the ends of our cigars on the door-steps of Petersham Square. 'And,' said Clipperley, reproachfully, 'you do get marrow-bones which are things to dream of at the Fly-by-Nights.'

I am free to confess, my dear Joseph, that I felt somewhat afraid of meeting Mrs. Clipperley that morning. She was, however, radiantly charitable. The post, I afterwards found out, had brought that good lady a letter from a venerable relative from whom the Clipperley household had expectations, signifying a hope that Mrs. Clipperley and her little boy—he is the *spes unica Troiae*—would come and spend a few days. Such an invitation as this it would be suicidal to refuse, and Mrs. Clipperley, profusely apologetic, an-

nounced her departure for the following morning. My opportunities, therefore, for renewing my acquaintance with the world of club life have been extended; for Clipperley and myself have decided that dinner in a snug coffee-room, with the accompaniment of humanity around one, is preferable to a solitary banquet in a deserted chamber. We have, therefore, troubled the cook at Petersham Square but little. Midwinter in Pall Mall and St. James's is not generally supposed to be a lively season. It is quite true that you don't see the long windows of White's lined with those august critics of the wayfarers in the street who are such eminent ornaments to that institution and their species in the afternoon of summer; that there are no four-in-hands to watch, as their noble drivers pilot them round the sharp corner by Sams'; and that the shades of night, settling upon the face of the earth by 5 P.M., sadly curtail one's opportunities for taking note of the victorias which speed swiftly by, and whose inmates may or may not be material for whole chapters of social criticism or revelation such as the omniscient cynics of club life love to supply. But there is a world of brightness and activity inside the walls of such an institution as the Polyphemus between the hours of 5 and 7, notwithstanding that the month is January, and that Mr. Tubbs has told you five minutes since that London is just now a second Sahara. The Polyphemus is not a political club; it is not literary—quite the reverse; it is not military. It was established for social purposes, and is as social as any club with fifteen hundred members on its books can be. Moreover, the Polyphemus is a hospitable club, otherwise I should

not be in it at this moment; you may take a friend to read the paper in the morning-room before the dinner hour, or you may give him a glass of sherry without his being stared at by the *habitués* of the establishment as an intruder, or without a velvet-clad menial coming up respectfully to remind you that it is against the laws to introduce visitors. I have just seen an old country neighbour of mine, Jack Padley, who has come up for a fortnight to do the round of the theatres. He is a member, it seems, of the Polyphemus, and as Mrs. Padley—for Jack would think himself a villain of the deepest dye, if he left his wife to languish in the solitude of Padbury, while he was revelling in the gorgeous and illuminated saloons of the metropolis—is not disposed to go out that evening, he intends to dine at the club, and has just emerged from the coffee-room, where he has devoted ten minutes to making such a selection from the *menu* as most commended itself to his healthy appetite. To a well-regulated mind, my dear Joseph, it is a genuine pleasure to witness the keen sense of enjoyment which a genial, light-hearted visitant to the flagstones and the chimney-pots of the metropolis, fresh from his paternal acres, like my friend Jack Padley, displays. He will return to his rural home with the consciousness that he has extended the horizon of his existence—accumulated a new stock of delightful mental experiences. Five months hence, when the London season is at its height, Jack will take another little run up to town—*comitante conjugé* again—not so much because he is anxious to remind the world of Hyde Park or Hurlingham that he is still in the flesh, as because he thinks that there is no place in or about London which can compare

with Lord's on a summer afternoon.

Appearances change: characters do not. Ten years ago, the morning-room at the Polyphemus was, at this hour, crowded with just the same life as that which now fills it; and so it will be ten years hence. Nay, I note that, in many cases, the individual gentlemen are the same. There is Mr. Tithonus Trouville—I don't know how old he is, neither does any one else; but I can recollect him an old man a quarter of a century since—exactly the same as he has been any time during the last decade. His step is perhaps a trifle lighter, and his air jauntier. Tithonus may be seventy, but he is nothing like so old in manner or in feeling as many a precociously *blase'* young gentleman of seventeen. He has got nothing to do, is a bachelor, and seems to belong to no one in particular. His lodgings are, as he says, across the way—Tithonus always accompanies the expression with a vague wave of the hand, pointed in every direction of the compass. For Mr. Tithonus Trouville, life is bounded by the walls of the Polyphemus. He breakfasts there—he lunches—he dines there. It is in the morning-room that he acquires, from conversation and from the newspapers, the only ideas on politics which he has: it is in the library that he has collected the few scraps of literary information which he possesses. The knowledge which Trouville has of the economy of the Polyphemus, is simply marvellous. He can tell you exactly how many servants are employed, what are their duties, what their wages. I verily believe he is acquainted with the particular ingredients which the Polyphemus' *chef* puts into those mysteriously-made dishes on which he prides himself. Morning, noon, or night, from 9 A.M. to 11

P.M., on entering the Polyphemus, you will see that cheery, genial, elderly juvenile gentleman, Mr. Tithonus Trouville; it was so A.D. 1862, and so it will be till an invisible hand is laid on Trouville's shoulder, and he is told to answer *adsum* to a call that he cannot resist.

And there is Mr. Trippingham, who carries about *in propria persona*, as it were, the concentrated essence of club life. It is a pity it is dark in the street of St. James, and that Mr. Trippingham is not enabled to instruct us on the subject of the foibles, the fashions, the follies, the heroes and heroines of the day. A few months hence, when, from morn to dewy eve, Pall Mall is crowded with vehicles, Trippingham will be in his glory. To that brougham attaches a mystery: that phaeton is a romance on wheels. If you remark, that there goes a 'neatish pair,' Trippingham will gently lay his hand upon your arm, and will proceed to unfold some tale which attaches to it. If you draw his attention to any particular individual, that will 'remind' Trippingham of something. He met him, or her, last summer at Baden, or last winter at Rome. To walk with Trippingham from the bottom of St. James's Street to Hyde Park Corner is like reading some exhaustive dissertation on the contemporary scandals of society. You cannot be always certain of securing Trippingham to yourself; he has mysterious engagements. There is a rumour that he has offices in the neighbourhood of Westminster. If so, it would scarcely seem that Mr. Trippingham does much business in them. Trippingham, however, has lounged up to the table, and commences, in a desultory way, to glance at the 'Occasional Notes' of the 'Pall Mall Gazette.' Five minutes' continuous reading

is an act which Trippingham never, to mortal knowledge, committed in his life. The only knowledge which he cares about is gleaned in the course of conversation; and you may now watch Trippingham's method. It is now six; Trippingham dines at 7.30: at seven he will retire to dress. He has, therefore, exactly an hour to spare. There are six gentlemen in the morning-room at the Polyphemus whom Mr. Trippingham will address; to each one he will devote ten minutes, neither more nor less. Seven o'clock will sound, and Mr. Trippingham will have gracefully waved his hand to the last of his confidants; for Trippingham is the most punctual man in existence.

The stream of loungers flows in steadily to the morning-room of the Polyphemus. Mr. Jawbuck has just entered, fresh from the City, talking very loud, and generally disposed to disparage everything. Commerce is largely represented in the Polyphemus; but in that respect the Polyphemus is not singular among the clubs of London. You might know that Mr. Jawbuck hailed from somewhere east of Temple Bar by the dazzling magnificence of his attire. Somebody the other day called Jawbuck a 'cheap swell.' The name was misapplied, for Jawbuck is 'worth money, sir!'-is 'worth money!' and abundantly compensates any deficiency in taste by profusion of personal expenditure. Into some reflections, my dear Joseph, which this theme suggests I will not go now. I had hoped in this letter to have introduced you to some of the political club life of the metropolis. That I am prevented from doing; and really I must hope that the opportunity of doing so will at some future time be given. Accept, therefore, my most distinguished consideration, and adieu!

WILLIE BLAKE'S TRIAL.

BY 'SARCELLE.'

AUTHOR OF 'ONLY A VAGABOND,' 'TWO CRUISES OF THE ROSE,' 'TWO TALES
OF ONE SHARK,' ETC.

CHAPTER III.

ONE LITTLE EWE LAMB.

OF course our hero went home with Mr. Davies, and spent the happiest evening that had fallen to his lot for some time. We may be sure that he exerted himself to please his hearty entertainers. He had long tales of sport, adventure, and woodcraft in wild distant lands for the head keeper, bright descriptions of scenery, manners and customs—ay, and costumes too—of savage races, incidents and adventures by turns amusing or pathetic, for pretty Maggie. And the pet of the family, tiny, golden-haired, five-year old Clara—who reminded him so strongly of his dear little Derbyshire friend—was faithless on this occasion to filial affection, for she left her accustomed place on her father's knee, and nestled snugly on Willie's, one arm round his neck, the other hand playing gently with his brown beard, while her big blue eyes opened wonderingly as she listened to what seemed to her one continuous fairy tale. As to Maggie, the heightened colour in her smooth cheeks, and the sparkle in her deep black eyes, told plainly that she was happy. She talked but little, yet, when she did speak, she gave proof of a good education and fair intellect, and Willie, making up his mind, with his usual swift impulsiveness, that fate had at last thrown him in the way of happiness, felt that in no respect—could he but win her—would he have cause to be

ashamed of the gamekeeper's daughter.

Ordinary prudence and conventional considerations had no weight at all with this big child of nine-and-twenty, more childish in nature and fresh in heart and mind than most youths of nineteen.

The time passed away right pleasantly; nine o'clock came, little Clara kissed him (how he wished it had been her sister), and said 'Good night;' Maggie sat while he and his host smoked 'just one more pipe,' and then, with a blush and a smile, she said 'Good night' too. And Willie Blake went to his comfortable little bed, with sheets that smelt of lavender, and dreamed of Maggie, and awoke next morning quite decided that his whole future happiness was bound up in her, and that that very day should decide his fate. Fortune seemed inclined to favour him, for when he went down to the cosy little parlour he found the fair girl alone, busy laying the breakfast things, and she told him that her father had gone as far as the under keeper's, and taken Clara with him, but would be back in time for breakfast.

'I'm very glad of that,' said Blake, 'for I wanted to speak to you alone.'

'To me, sir?' she asked, with a pretty blush and a look of considerable astonishment.

'Yes, to you, Maggie,' and then





he went on to tell her, in a torrent of eloquent, heartfelt words, how through many years and in many lands he had longed and pined for the love of a woman like her, how he had felt when he first saw her yesterday that he instinctively loved her with all his heart, how he would devote his whole life to making her happy, how he would soon have enough to give her a home of moderate comfort, and, if encouraged by her love, would exert every energy to increase that comfort to affluence and luxury. All this and more, with a wonderful flow of eager, loving, caressing words, did Willie pour into the willing ear of the delighted Maggie. Looking upon him as a gentleman, and herself as below him in station, she had at first thought that the love he spoke of meant her dishonour, but when he quickly undeceived her, and she felt that he really loved her—strange and sudden though it seemed—and wanted her to be his happy wife, then she put her plump little hand in his, and said, half laughing, half crying, ‘You must see what father says, Mr. Blake.’ Of course, in another instant she was clasped to his arms, and Mr. Davies, opening the door at this interesting juncture, was horrified to find his guest kissing his daughter, and the latter making not the slightest resistance—but rather the reverse.

‘What father said’ then was something pretty sharp, as might have been expected.

‘Mr. Blake, I took you for a gentleman, and you’ve acted like a blackguard. Just come out here, and see if I can’t give you the d—dest thrashing ever you got in your life!’

‘No you won’t, father,’ said Maggie, blazing into unwonted wrath, and standing, with flashing eyes, between her angry father

and her accepted lover. And the audacious Mr. Blake actually laughed—‘Don’t strike me just yet, Mr. Davies,’ he said, coolly; ‘I’ve done nothing that we need quarrel about.’

‘What!’ cried the astounded keeper; ‘kissing my daughter before my very eyes! Come out before I kick you out!’ Willie hereupon burst out laughing again, and then told the old man all about it. Worthy Mr. Davies was greatly ‘exercised in his mind,’ in fact he could not have been much more astonished if his noble employer had suddenly told him he had come to the conviction that game preserving was wrong, and that he meant to throw open his coverts to John a’ Nokes, Tom a’ Stiles, and the rest of the miscellaneous *canaille* of the neighbourhood. ‘Why,’ said the poor bewildered head keeper, ‘I never heard the like of this! You never set eyes on her before yesterday, and now you talk about marrying her. And you a gentleman, too! Now, will you swear to me that you mean honestly?’ Willie immediately took the blushing girl’s hand in his, and proved himself quite equal to the occasion, saying, ‘Mr. Davies, I ask you to sanction my engagement to your daughter, and it will be a happy day for me when I can call her my wife.’

‘Well, this is the quickest bit of courting that ever I heard of. But what will Sam Waters say, my lass?’

Sam Waters was the under-keeper, whom Mr. Davies looked upon with a patronizing favour, but his daughter with supreme disdain.

‘Oh, father! You know I always told you I never could care for him, and I told him only last week he must never expect such a thing.’

The old man had by this time recovered his natural good-humour.

'Well, I suppose people that are in love can live on air, like camelias' (he meant chameleons, but his natural history lore did not extend beyond the fauna of England), 'but I don't see why I should go without my breakfast.'

Indeed the preparations for the morning meal had been totally interrupted, but Maggie now began to bustle about to make up for lost time, and soon they sat down to a cosy breakfast.

Willie explained that he would not have spoken so soon but for having to return to London in two days, and then he again astounded poor Mr. Davies by begging very hard to be allowed to take out a special license and marry Maggie immediately. But both father and daughter were, of course, firm in their refusal of so absurd a proposal. In vain Willie pleaded that he had his work to do and his way to make in the world, that he would not have another holiday for nearly a year, and could not possibly bear so long an interval without seeing Maggie.

'But you will see her, my lad. She is going up to London soon to stay for a month or two with an aunt who is married there. You may call upon her then as often as you like. Wait and see if you are of the same mind in six months' time. If you are—which I very much doubt, mind you—why, then will be time enough to talk about the wedding.'

This was rather a damper for our ardent hero. He pleaded hard that the period of probation might be reduced to three months. He wanted to make sure of his new-found bliss, for he had a strange kind of inward feeling that this was his only chance of real

peace and happiness, and that, if too long deferred, it might escape from him like a shadow. But it was of no avail.

So, after two days, the greater part of which he spent with Maggie, he went by the night mail from C—— to London, a happier man than when he had left the metropolis a fortnight before, for he felt that he had now got an object in life—something to work and hope for. So he worked as he had never worked before, and his companions were astonished at the change. No more evenings of even the most innocent dissipation, no more uproarious bachelor supper parties and matutinal headaches; an occasional day's fishing was all the recreation he allowed himself, spending most of his leisure hours in study, keeping up the languages he had acquired abroad, learning new ones, and devoting time and attention to all subjects likely to aid his advancement in the commercial career he had chosen. Of course he was frequently cheered by nice little affectionate letters from Maggie, and he sent her many pages covered with the eloquent language of true attachment. There was a great difference between their letters, however. Willie told her everything he was doing, gave her, in fact, the smallest details of his personal daily life described in a vivid and amusing way; or sometimes gave the reins to his rich imagination, and told her of the pleasures they might enjoy together in the future—of country, and river, and sea, of spring green-woods, of fair foreign lands—all that was bright and beautiful. Every one of his letters contained sentence after sentence, too, full of the expression of his ardent love for her, of his trust in her, and of the bright hope of his life. He would ask her many

little questions, too, begging her to tell him the very slightest and most trivial things about herself; how she dressed, where she went, how she felt, what she worked at, what she read, and a thousand other trifles—matters of perfect indifference to ordinary friends, but inestimably dear and interesting to a lover. But, though Maggie rather liked receiving long epistles of twelve pages, by turns eloquent or amusing, always loving and sympathetic, she never could arrive at replying to them as they deserved. She would begin and end her little missives with warm, affectionate words, truly, but then she would waste a good deal of her ink in commenting on Willie's letter instead of replying to it. Now, he didn't want his letters commented on and praised, he wanted to know all the little things about her. She did not seem, in fact, ever to put his letters before her in a business-like way, to answer every item that demanded attention, for, though she often referred to the things he said about himself, she generally managed to ignore all his little questions. This was slightly aggravating, but Willie was the best-tempered and most charitable of men, and also the least suspicious. It never occurred to him that these defects in her letter-writing indicated that she had not nearly as strong and deep a feeling for him as he had for her. So the man lived and toiled on in hope, and the date soon arrived which had been fixed for Maggie's visit to town.

She came, and then of course he worked somewhat less assiduously, for he had to devote all his leisure to the fair girl, showing her all the sights and amusements of town, which he knew so well, but which were all so new and wonderful to her, and which she could not have visited with a

better cicerone, for Willie's information seemed to be universal, and his fund of high spirits, wit, and humour to be inexhaustible. Truly the two months she spent in London were a very happy time for both of them.

* * *

Two more months had passed away; Maggie had gone back to C—— full of happiness and increased affection. Willie's salary had been raised to 250*l.*, and he was looking forward with the most ardent longing to the period when the wedding-day might be fixed.

For the more he had seen of her, the deeper and stronger had grown his wonderfully sudden and instinctive love. And she? Well, she really loved him a little, and was flattered by the admiration and devotion of a 'gentleman,' so different in appearance, manners, and language from the rejected Sam Waters, the under keeper, and the rest of her rustic admirers. She was not capable of the deep, abiding, daily-increasing affection and tenderness which ought to have been inspired by such a nature as Willie's. But still she might make him a very good little wife, and doubtless meant to do so.

How was it, then, that about this time there seemed to be an unsatisfactory variableness in her letters?

Sometimes she would redouble her expressions of affection; in others she would be cold, and say nothing affectionate; while in some—which pained poor Willie more than he liked to confess to himself—she would repeat sadly that she was not worthy of him. And he kept putting the best construction on everything; writing her such cheering, tender, pleading epistles back as ought to have touched the coldest heart.

But there was another influence at work, counteracting the health-

ful effects of true-hearted Willie's simple eloquence. He was not the only man who had remarked the rustic beauty on that famous day of Lord T——'s battue. The bold glance of Lord H—— had chanced to fall upon her; he saw something new and *piquant* about her, and marked her for his own.

A handsome man of only thirty, with all the advantages of birth, wealth, good looks, and accomplishments, Lord H——'s reputation as a *roué* was almost European—and really I don't think that 'Society' liked him any the less for it; at any rate, if 'Society' did disapprove of some of his lordship's proceedings, it never showed it to him. His latest *protégée*—who had left the establishment of a fashionable milliner for a detached villa in that quiet neighbourhood termed by a humorous writer, 'the shady groves of the Evangelist'—had, after spending a few thousands with him, gone to swell the luxurious ranks of the Parisian *demi-monde*, under the protecting wing of a rich Russian. True the peer, thus abandoned, was not without some fair and frail consolers; but one was too old, another too stupid, another he had known so long that familiarity had, as usual, bred contempt; so Lord H—— was casting his roving eyes about him for some fresh excitement.

Space would fail to give a detailed account of the manœuvres by which, commencing his attack immediately on the return of Maggie from her London visit, he and an old and faithful emissary, long tried in similar service, were gradually undermining her resolution to be true to poor Blake. The girl was too conscious of her beauty—too vain and fond of display, to resist long the subtle attack of so accomplished a libertine.

For to such a nature, not forti-

fied by strong principle, nor by a really deep and all-absorbing affection, the dazzling promises of the aristocrat, filling her mind with dreams of infinite luxury—of gold and jewels, carriages and servants, sumptuous attire, foreign travel and constant excitement—soon caused the humble home and true affection offered her by Willie to lose its value and attractiveness.

Did she ever think how hard it would be on the poor fellow who had given her his whole heart so freely and trustfully? No; for she was incapable of very deep feeling, or of real, earnest passion, and could not, therefore, appreciate it in others. But if Lord H—— had only known all, and had thoroughly understood how completely this love of Willie's was life and salvation to him—his very all, the only hope he had, and his only incentive to steadiness, work, and success—he might have hesitated. For the wealthy peer had had many mistresses before, and he would have no difficulty in finding many even more beautiful than Maggie.

But he was very far from realising all this. For when his valet and confidant informed him that Maggie Davies was engaged to a man who, though not rich, was a thorough gentleman, the peer laughed and said to himself, 'Parbleu! I am glad to hear it. By carrying off my pretty Maggie I shall be doing the foolish fellow a real service—saving him from a *mésalliance*. Doing a charitable action, and gratifying myself at the same time—a delightful combination!'

So he threw himself with all the more ardour into the pursuit; and the end of it was that, just a fortnight before the time at which Willie Blake was hoping to claim his bride—looking forward to it with eagerness, yet feeling a cer-

tain aching at heart, and some vague forebodings of evil, from certain strange expressions in her less frequent letters—one evening, when he had come home, tired yet happy, for he saw a prospect of being further advanced by his employers to a post of responsibility which would considerably increase his income, he found the following note lying on his table:—

‘DEAR WILLIE,

‘I always knew I was not worthy of you, and often told you so. Try to forget me, and do not seek after me. I hope you will soon find some good girl who will make you happy. I am very wicked. I hope you will not grieve much for me. Thank you a thousand times for all the affection you bestowed on poor unworthy

‘MAGGIE.’

Poor Willie staggered and put his hand to his heart, as if he had received a death-stab. In an instant he felt that all was dark with him, for the sunshine had gone out of his life; his dream of happiness was over; the satisfaction which his brightening worldly prospects had afforded him was utterly lost in the pain of this cruel blow. There are, doubtless, men who could be philosophical in such a case as this, and say, ‘Well, this is a little bitter, but I know the sharpness of it will pass away in time. I will work; I will amuse myself; I will do all sorts of things to distract my mind.’ But there are certain other men, with warm hearts and deep, intense feelings, who at such a moment can realise nothing but utter misery and hopeless despair—the total cessation of all brightness—and who have it not in their power, either morally or physically, to do any work, to read or write, to be amused at anything, or to under-

stand anything except the one all-pervading sense of dreary misery. My poor friend was one of these latter. In the bitterness of his grief he cried out aloud, ‘Oh! Maggie, Maggie! we might have been so happy!’

After a time he was able to think a little, and then he quickly guessed that she had been tempted by the dazzling baits of wealth and luxury held out by some noble seducer, and thought there might even yet be time to bring her back before she became irretrievably lost.

Ay, but to find her? He had no clue. The letter bore no post-mark. It had been delivered by a man like a Commissionnaire, his landlady said, gazing wonderingly the while at his pallid face, wild-looking eyes, and trembling hands. His next impulse was to hurry down by the first train to C—. It happened to be an express; but how slowly it seemed to move!

But the train got down to the shores of the Bristol Channel at last, and soon he was hurrying along the pretty country road towards the keeper’s house, which he had last trod when he was going back to his work in London, full of hope and love.

He found the old keeper in a stupor of grief, and poor little Clara ran, with tearful eyes, to kiss him. The abduction—or rather elopement, had been so scientifically planned and carried out that the poor father had no clue to the direction of Maggie’s flight, though he had also received a few lines from her, begging him to forgive her, and not to seek for her. So the two men pondered over their grief, and looked at her empty chair.

Then Blake, thinking of their first meeting at the great battue, suddenly remembered having seen Lord H—— there. He happened

to know something of his lordship's reputation, and quickly and instinctively his suspicions fastened on the right man. The old keeper thought the same. Leave of absence being readily granted to him by the steward, the father and lover hurried back to town, to seek for traces of the movements of the man they both suspected. After spending much time and money in the search, they found that Lord H—— was 'off on his travels again,' and was accompanied by a young lady whose description answered to Maggie. But to what part of the world he had gone they totally failed to find out.

Then came a letter to Mr. Davies enclosing money—a letter with a few brief lines that now indicated neither repentance nor regret. So he locked up the money, to be returned whenever there might be an opportunity, and went back to his work, a sad-hearted, broken old man.

And he told Blake, when they parted, that he had but one daughter now; and gave the young man good advice, telling him to forget the lost girl; to work on, make for himself a good position, and seek some good girl among his own class to make him happy.

Truly Blake might have done so. But this blow had utterly destroyed all his good resolutions.

His thoughts were so utterly dark, wild, and despairing, that he had recourse to the worst means of escaping from them; soon, instead of his cheerful, health-giving wanderings with rod and gun, he began to spend his time in scenes of low dissipation, and became Wild Willie again; but much wilder, and with a far worse wildness, than before. He lost his situation; spent all the little money he had saved; and then, obliged to work to keep

himself from starving, and being considered untrustworthy, was obliged to accept a very subordinate post, where he is still drudging on, a broken man, living without hope, without affection, almost without human sympathy. He has fallen—as many a bright nature has fallen before him—and is likely enough to end his days in utter misery and poverty, ruined by a woman's folly.

And the woman? We have seen her of late: she seems happy enough; she is the talk of the clubs; she attracts much admiration in the Row and the Drive; her portrait may now be seen in many photographers' and stationers' windows, and she is carelessly squandering the money of even a wealthier man than Lord H——; who, by the way, was not much affected when she left him, and soon consoled himself, like a true, easy-going, philosophical man of the world as he is.

Perhaps Maggie Davies, though she is known by a less plebeian name now, is really happy. For who shall say what constitutes happiness to a woman? To many of the sex, at any rate, it is luxury, fine raiment, jewels, display to dazzle all beholders: and to such natures an honest man's heart is a frail plaything, to be broken and thrown aside.

But Willie Blake is not dead yet; he is still young, and we would fain hope—though it seems almost hoping against hope—that he may yet throw off the dull misery of drink, retrieve his position in the world, and find a true woman, with a real heart, to console him for all that was bitter in the past.

Reader, if you have felt any sympathy and pity for our erring, wayward, foolish hero, as you perused this true tale of his trial, surely you hope so too?

THE QUEEN'S CADET.

' I HAVE been forced to believe in the existence and influence of an unseen world, of something which is described in that line of Dryden's,

" With silent steps I follow you all day."

' I have felt the influence of the spiritual and invisible on the senses, though I know nothing of the complications, the deceptions and alleged perils forming a portion of that which is now termed spiritualism; and which affirms that the unseen world cannot become manifest, save in obedience to certain occult laws which regulate the phenomena of Nature.'

What rigmarole was this?

Could the speaker—this man with the melancholy tone and saddened eye—actually be the same handsome Jack Arkley, my old college chum at Sandhurst, who was always rather sceptical even in religious matters, who was one of the merriest fellows there, who had been once nearly rusticated for breaking the lamps and dismounting the guns to spite the adjutant, but who, as a Queen's cadet, had more marks of excellence than any of us; who was afterwards the beau-ideal of a fine young English officer—a prime bat and bowler, who pulled a good stroke oar, had such a firm seat in his saddle, and who was the best hand for organising a pic-nic, a ball, or a scratch company for amateur theatricals; and who in the late expedition against the Looshais, had won the reputation of being a regular fire-eater—a fellow who would face the devil in his shirt-sleeves!

Could the champagne of 'the Rag' have affected him, thought I, as he continued earnestly and sadly, and while manipulating a

cigar selected from the silver stand on the table:

' I have somewhere read that very few persons in this world have been unfortunate enough to have seen those things that are invisible to others.'

' By Jove! Do you mean a—ghost?'

' Not exactly the vulgar ghost of the nursery,' said he, his pale face colouring slightly.

' But we have all met with those who knew some one else who had seen something weird, unearthly, unexplainable.'

' Precisely; but I shall speak from personal experience—so now for a little narrative of my own.'

We had dined that evening at the club, where D—— of the Greys had given a few fellows a dinner, in honour of being gazetted to his troop, and to 'wet' the new commission; and though it seemed to me that, like the rest of us, Jack Arkley had done justice to all the good things set before him, from the soup to the coffee and curaçoa, he had been, during dinner, remarkably *triste* or abstracted, and took but little interest in the subjects discussed by the guests, who were mostly all upon short leave from Aldershot, and, the Spring drills being over, were thankful to exchange the white dust of the Long Valley, for the Row or Regent Street.

We were alone now, and lingering over some iced brandy-pawnee (as we called it in India) in the cool bay-window of his room in Piccadilly, where it overlooked the pleasant Green Park, and where the clock of Westminster was shining above the trees, like a red harvest moon. So I prepared to listen to him with more curiosity than belief, while he related

the following singular story, which he would never have ventured to relate to the circle of heedless fellows whom we had just left.

' My parents died when I was little more than an infant, leaving me to the care of two uncles, a maternal one, named Beverley, a man of considerable wealth, who in consequence of a quarrel with my father, whose marriage with his sister he resented, totally ignored my existence, and was ever a kind of myth to me; the other a paternal one, a bachelor curate in North Wales, poor old Morgan Apreece Arkley, than whom there was no better or more kind-hearted man in all the principality.

' His means were most limited; but to share the little he possessed he made me freely and tenderly welcome, all the more so that to two appeals he had made to the generosity of my Uncle Beverley, no response was ever returned—a cutting coldness and rudeness, bitterly resented, by my hot-tempered but warm-hearted old Welsh kinsman.

' A career was necessarily chosen for me.

' The death of my father on duty at Benares, enabled me to be borne on the strength of the Military College at Sandhurst as one of the twenty Queen's cadets; and to that seminary I repaired, a few months after you did, when in my sixteenth year, leaving with sincere sorrow, the lonely white-haired man who had been as a parent to me, and whose secluded parsonage by the margin of Llyn Ogwen, and under the shadow of Carneydd Davydd, had been the only home I could remember. There for years he had been my earnest and anxious tutor, mingling with the classics a store of quaint old Welsh legends and ancient songs, for he was an excellent and

enthusiastic harper, and had come of a long line of harpers.

' Prior to this change in my life, I encountered an adventure which has had considerable influence in my after career.

' From childhood I had been familiar with the mountains that overhang Llyn Ogwen. I knew every track and rock and fissure of Carneydd Davydd, of "the Black Ladders" of Carneydd Llewellyn, and the brows of the greater giant of the three, cloud-capped Snowdon. For miles upon miles among them I had been wont to wander with my gun, and at times to aid the shepherds in tracking out lost sheep or goats, by places where we looked down upon the grey mist and vapour that floated below us, and where the mountain peaks seemed to start out of it like isles amid a sea. In the heart of such solitudes as these I found food for much reflective thought, and was wont to give full swing to my boyish fancies.

' Under every variety of season and weather I was wont to wander among these mountains; sometimes when their sides seemed to vibrate under the hot rays of a cloudless summer sun; at others when the glistening snow lay deep in the passes and valleys, or when height and hollow were alike shrouded in thick and impenetrable mist; but my favourite spot was ever Llyn Idwal, the wildest and most savage of all our Welsh lakes. It fills the crater of an ancient volcano, and is the traditional scene of the murder of Idwal, a prince of Wales, who was flung over its precipice—a place which for gloomy grandeur has no equal, as the bare rocks that start out of it, sheer as a wall, darken by their shadows its depth to the most intense blackness; and the

peasants aver that no fish can swim in it, and no bird fly over it and live.

' Lying upon the mountain tops, amid the purple heather or the scented thyme-grass, I was wont to watch the distant waters of the Channel, stretching far away beyond the Puffin Isle and Great Orme's Head, ever changing in hue as the masses of cloud skimmed over them; and from thence I followed, with eager eyes, the white sails of the ships, or the long smoky pennants of the steamers that were bound for —ah! where were they bound for?—and so, far from the solitary parsonage of the good old man who loved me so well, I was ungrateful enough to follow to distant isles and shores these vanishing specks, in the spirit.

' I see that you are impatient to know what all this preamble has to do with Sandhurst and the melancholy which now oppresses me; but, nevertheless, I am fast coming to the matter—to "that keystone of the soul, which must exist in every nature."

' One day I was up a wild part of the mountains, far above Llyn Ogwen, a long and narrow sheet of water which occupies the whole pass between Braich-ddu and the shoulder of Carneydd Davydd. My sole companion was my dog Cidwm—in English, "Wolf,"—which lay beside me on the sunny grass, when from one of my day-dreams I was suddenly roused by voices, and found three persons close beside me.

' Mounted on sturdy Welsh ponies, two of these were a gentleman in the prime of life, and a very young lady, apparently his daughter, attended by David Lloyd, one of the guides for the district, who knew me well. He led the bridle of the girl's pony with one hand, and grasped his

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alpenstock with the other. This group paused near me, and some conversation ensued. Lloyd had evidently mistaken the path, and was loth to admit the fact, or to suggest that they should retrace their steps, and yet he knew enough of the mountains to be well aware that to advance would be to court danger. During the colloquy that ensued between him and his employer, a haughty and imperious-looking man, I was earnestly gazing in the half-averted face of the girl, who was watching an eagle in full flight.

' She was marvellously beautiful. Her features—save in profile—were perhaps far from correct, yet there was a divine delicacy, a charming purity of complexion, and brightness of expression over them all; and her minute face seemed to nestle amid the masses of her fair rippling hair. She turned towards me, and her eyes met mine. They were dark violet blue, and shaded by brown lashes, so long that they imparted much of softness to their dove-like expression, and she smiled, for no doubt the little maid saw that there was something of unequivocal admiration to be read in my ardent gaze; and so absorbed was I, that, for a few seconds, I was not aware that the guide was addressing me, and inquiring if I knew how far the path was traversable in this particular direction. Ere I could reply,

' "How should this mere lad know, if you don't?" asked the male tourist, haughtily and sharply.

' "Few here can know better, sir," replied Lloyd. "I have seen him climb where the eagles alone can go."

' "Shall we proceed, then?" he asked of me, sharply.

"I think not, sir," said I; "Moel

Hebog was covered with mist this morning, and——”

“But Moel Hebog is clear enough now,” said David Lloyd, with irritation—the mountain so named being deemed an unerring barometer, as regards the chances of mist upon its greater brethren —“so I think we may proceed,” he added, touching his hat to his employer. “I don’t require, sir, to be taught my trade by a mere lad, a gentlemen thof you be, Master Arkley.”

“*Arkley!*” repeated the stranger, starting, and eyeing me keenly, and yet with a lowering expression of face.

‘I warned them of the danger of farther progression, but the avaricious guide derided me; and I heard his employer, as they passed on, asking him some questions, amid which—but it might be fancy—I thought my own name occurred. I gazed after them with interest, and with much of anxiety, for their path was perilous, and the sweet, soft beauty of the girl had impressed me deeply; and, as she disappeared, with all her wealth of golden hair, the brightness seemed to have departed from the mountain side.

‘What was the magic this creature, whom I had only seen for a few minutes, possessed for me? She was scarcely a woman, yet past childhood; and her features remained as distinctly impressed upon my memory as if they were before me still. Do not infer from this strange interest that “love at first sight,” as the novels used to have it, was an ingredient of this emotion. No; it was something deeper—a subtle magnetism—something that I know not how to define or to express; and, with a repining sigh, I thought of my lonely life, and longed to go forth on the career that awaited me beyond those

green mountains that were bounded by the sea.

‘Had I ever seen that fair little-face before, or dreamed of it, by night or by day, that already it seemed to haunt me so?

‘The little group had not disappeared above five minutes, when a sound like a cry was borne past me on the mountain breeze. I started up, my heart beating wildly; and, with undefined apprehension, hastened in the direction of the sound, while Wolf careered in front of me. There now came the sound of hoofs, and, with bridle trailing, saddle reversed, and nostrils distended, the pony on which I had so recently seen the young girl, came tearing over the crest of the hill, and galloped madly past me towards Llyn Idwal.

‘Quicker beat my heart, and my breath came thick and fast. Something dreadful had taken place! True to his instincts as ever was the faithful Gelert of the Welsh tradition, Wolf sped in haste to the edge of what I knew to be a frightful ravine. There the hoof-marks were fresh in the turf, the edge of which was broken; the grass, too, was crushed and torn, as if something had fallen over it. The dog now paused, lifted up his nose, and howled ominously. I peered over; and far down below, on a ledge of green turf, but perilously overhanging a chasm in the mountain side, lay that which appeared at first to be a mere bundle of clothes, but which I knew to be the little maiden dead—doubtlessly dead—and a wail of sorrow escaped me.

‘Her father and the guide had disappeared.

‘Partly sliding, partly descending as if by a natural ladder, finding footing and grasp where many might have found neither, mechanically, and as one in a dream,

I reached her in about ten minutes ; and, as I had a naturally boyish dread of facing death, with joy I saw her move, and then took her in my arms tenderly and caressingly ; while she opened her eyes and sighed deeply, for the fall had stunned and shaken her severely. Otherwise she was, happily, uninjured ; but I had reached her just in time, for, if left to herself, she must have tottered and fallen into the terrible profundity below.

"Papa ! oh, where is my papa ? I was thrown suddenly from my pony—a bird scared it—and remember no more ;" then a passion of tears and terror came over her, with the consciousness of the peril she had escaped and that which still menaced her, for to ascend was quite impracticable, and to descend seemed nearly equally so. Above us the mountain side seemed to rise like a wall of rock ; on the other hand, at the bottom of the ravine, where the shadows of evening were dark and blue, though sunset still tipped Snowdon's peaks with fire, and clouds of crimson and gold were floating above us, I could see a rivulet, a tributary of the Ogwen, glittering like a silver thread far down, perhaps a thousand feet below.

"Courage," said I, while for a time my heart died within me ; "I shall soon conduct you to a place of safety."

"But papa, he will die of fright. Where is my papa ?" she exclaimed, piteously.

"Gone round some other way," I suggested. And subsequently this proved to be the case. Placing an arm round her for aid, we now began to descend, but slowly, the face of the hill, which was there so steep and shelved so abruptly, that to lose one step might have precipitated us to the

bottom with a speed that would have insured destruction. From rock to rock, from bush to bush, and from cleft to cleft, I guided and often lifted her, sometimes with her eyes closed ; and gazed the while with boyish rapture on the beautiful girl, as her head drooped upon my shoulder. She had lost her hat, and the unbound masses of her golden hair, blown by the wind, came in silken ripples across my face ; and delight, mingled with alarm, bewildered me.

"Till that hour no sorrow could have affected a spirit so pure as hers ; and certainly love could not have agitated it — she was so young. But when we drew nearer the base of the hill, and reached a place of perfect safety, the soft colour came back to her face, and the enchantment of her smile was as indescribable as the clear violet blue of her eye, which filled with wonder and terror as she gazed upward to the giddy verge from which she had partly fallen ; and then a little shudder came over her.

"With a boy's ready ardour, I was already beginning to dream of being beloved by her, when excited voices came on the wind ; and round an angle of the ravine into which we had descended came Lloyd, the guide, several peasants, and her father ; who had partially witnessed our progress, and whose joy in finding her alive and well, when he might have found her dashed perhaps out of the very semblance of humanity, was too great for words. The poor man wept like a very woman, as he embraced her again and again, and muttered in broken accents his gratitude to me, and praise of my courage. Suddenly he exclaimed to the guide,

"You said his name was—Arkley, I think ?"

"Yes, sir," replied Lloyd.

"John Beverley Arkley, nephew of the curate at the foot of the mountain yonder?" he added, turning to me.

"The same, sir."

"Good heavens! I am your Uncle Beverley!" said he, colouring deeply, and taking my hand again in his. "The girl you have saved is your own cousin—my darling Eve. I owe you some reparation for past neglect, so come with me to the parsonage at once."

'Here was a discovery that quite took away my breath. So this dazzling little Hebe was my cousin! How fondly I cherished and thought over this mysterious tie of blood—near almost as a sister, and yet no sister. It was very sweet to ponder over and to nurse the thoughts of affection, and all that yet might be.

'What a happy, happy night was that in the ancient parsonage! The good old Curate forgave Uncle Beverley all the shortcomings in the years that were past, and seemed never to weary of caressing the wonderful hair and the tiny hands of Evelyn Beverley, for such was her name, though familiarly known as Eve.

"It is quite a romance, this," said kind Uncle Arkley to his brother-in-law; "the young folks will be falling in love!"

Eve grew quite pale, and cast down her eyes; while I blushed furiously.

"Stuff!" said Uncle Beverley, somewhat sharply. "She has barely cut her primers and pinafores, and Jack has Sandhurst before him yet."

'He presented me with his gold repeater, and departed by the first convenient train, taking my newly-discovered relation with him. I had a warm invitation to visit them for a few weeks before entering at Sandhurst; and, to add to my joy and impatience, I found

that Beverley Lodge was in Berkshire, and within a mile of the College: and so, but for the presence of the golden gift, and the memory of a kind and grateful kiss from a beautiful lip—a kiss that made every nerve thrill—I might have imagined that the whole adventure on the slopes of Carneydd Davydd was but a dream.

'Naturally avaricious, cold, and hard in heart, Mr. Beverley had warmed to me for a time, but a time only; yet I revered and almost loved him. He was the only brother of my dead mother, whom I had never known. She—this golden-haired girl—was of her blood, and had her name; so my whole soul clung to her with an amount of youthful ardour, such as I cannot portray to you—for I was always much of an enthusiast—and I was again alone, to indulge in the old tenor of my ways amid the voiceless mountain solitudes.

'Again and again in my lonely wanderings had my mind been full of vague longings and boyish aspirations after glory, pleasure, and love: and now the memory of Eve's minute and perfect face—so pure and English in its beauty—by its reality filled up all that had been a blank before; and I was ever in fancied communion with her, while lying on the hill-slopes and looking to the sea that sparkled at the far horizon, into the black ravines through which the mountain brooks went foaming to the rocky shore, or where our deep Welsh *llyns* were gleaming in the sunshine like gold and turquoise blue—amid the monotony of the silent woods; and so the time passed on, and the day came when I was to start for Beverley Lodge, and thence to Sandhurst; while love and ambition rendered me selfishly oblivious of poor old Uncle Morgan,

and the fervent wishes and blessings with which he followed my departing steps.

'A month's visit to Beverley Lodge, amid the fertility of Berkshire, many a ride and ramble in the Vale of the White Horse, many an hour spent by us together in the shady woods, the luxurious garden, in the beautiful conservatory, and in the deep leafy lanes where we wandered at will, confirmed the love my cousin and I bore each other. A boy and a girl, it came easily about; while many were our regrets and much was our marvelling that we had not known each other earlier.

'No two men make a declaration of love, perhaps, in precisely the same way, though it all comes to the same thing in the end; but it might be interesting to know in what precise terms, and having so little choice, Father Adam declared his passion for Mother Eve, and in what fashion she responded.

'I know not now how my love for *my* little Eve was expressed; but told it was, and I departed for college the happiest student there, every hour I could spare from study and drill being spent in or about Beverley Lodge.

'With an income of 40*l.* per annum till gazetted I almost thought myself rich; and I had three years before me—it seemed an eternity of joy—to look forward to. At Sandhurst I was, as you know, entered as a Queen's cadet *free*, and a candidate for the infantry. I had thus to master algebra, the three first books of Euclid, French, German, and "Higher Fortification;" but in the pages of Straith, amid the ravelins of Vauban and the casemates of Coehorn, I seemed to see only the name and the tender eyes of Eve. The daily drills, in which I was at first an enthusiast, became dull and pro-

saic, and hourly I made terrible mistakes, for Eve's voice was ever in my ear, and her delicate beauty haunted me; for wondrously delicate it became, as consumption—which she fatally inherited from her mother—shed over it a medium that was alike soft and alluring.

'Since then I have met girls of all kinds everywhere. Though only a sub, I have been dressed for, played for, sung for; but never have I had the delight of those remembered days that were passed with Eve Beverley in our dream of cousinly love; however, a rude waking was at hand!

'When she was eighteen, and I a year older, she told me one day that her father had been insisting upon her marrying an old friend of his, a retired Sudder judge, who had proposed in form; but she had laughed at the idea.

"Absurd! It is so funny of papa to have a husband ready cut and dry for me; is it not, Jack?" said she.

'I did not think so; but my heart beat painfully as I leaned caressingly over her, and played with her beautiful hair.

"I don't thank him for selecting a husband for me, Jack, dear," she continued, pouting; "do you?"

"Certainly not, Eve."

"But I must prepare my mind for the awful event," said she, looking up at me with a bright, waggish smile.

'The time was fast approaching, however, when neither of us could see anything "funny" in the prospect; for "the awful event" became alarmingly palpable, when one day she met me with tears, and threw herself on my breast, saying:

"Save me, dearest Jack—save me!"

"From whom?"

"Papa and his odious old Sudder judge, Jack, love. You

know that I must marry you, and you only!"

"The devil he does!" said a voice, sharply; and there, grim as Ajax, stood Uncle Beverley, with hands clenched and brows knit. "My sister married his father, a beggar, with only his pay; and now, minx, you dare to love their son, by heavens, with no pay at all! Leave this house, sir—be gone instantly!" he added, furiously, to me. "I would rather that she had broken her neck on the mountains than treated me to a scene like this."

The gates of Beverley Lodge closed behind me, and our dream was over.

Half my life seemed to have left me. After three years of such delightful intercourse I could not adopt the conviction that I should never see her again; and in a very unenviable state of mind I entered the college, where you may remember meeting me under the Doric portico, and saying:

"What's up, Jack? But let me congratulate you."

"On what?" I asked, sulkily.

Your appointment to the Buffs. The 'Gazette' has just come from town. They are stationed at Jubbulpore."

And so it proved that the very day I lost her saw me in the service, with India, and a far and final separation before us. Necessity compelled us to prepare for an almost instant departure; short leave was given me by the adjutant-general; and I had to join the Candahar transport, going with drafts from Chatham for the East, on a certain day.

Rumours reached me of Eve being seriously ill. She was secluded from me, and there was every chance that I should see her no more. A letter came from her imploring me to meet her for the last time at a spot known to

us both—a green lane that led to a churchyard stile—the scene of many a tender tryst and blissful hour, as it was a place where overhanging trees, with the golden apple, the purple damson, and the plum, formed a very bower, and where few or none ever came, save on Sunday; and there we met for the last time!

There once again her head lay on my shoulder, my circling arm was round her, and her hot, tremulous hand was clasped in mine. I was shocked by the change I perceived in her. Painful was her pallor to look upon; there were circles dark as her lashes under her sad, melancholy eyes; her nostrils and lips were unnaturally pink; she had a short, dry cough; and blood appeared more than once upon her handkerchief.

Consumption on one hand, and parental tyranny on the other, were fast doing their fatal work.

Her father was pitiless and inexorable—wonderfully, infamously so, as he was so rich that mere money was no object, and as she was his only child, and one so tender, and so fragile. His studied system of deliberate "worry" had wrung a consent from her; she was to marry the old judge; and in more ways than one I felt that too surely I was losing her for ever. She could not go out with me. I felt desperate, and in silence folded her again and again to my breast. At last the ting-tong of the old church clock announced the hour when we must part, never to meet again, and the fatal sound struck us like a shock of electricity.

"Jack, my dearest—my dearest," she whispered wildly; "I don't think I shall live very long now. I may—nay, I must, die very soon; but the spirit is imperishable, and I shall always be with you, wherever you may be,

wherever you may go, hovering near you, I hope, like a guardian angel!"

' Her words struck me as strange and wild ; I did not attach much importance to them then, but they have had a strange and terrible significance since.

"Would you welcome me?" she asked, with a mournful smile.

"Dead or living shall I welcome you!" I replied, with mournful ardour.

"Then kiss me once again, dear Jack ; and now we part—in this world, at least!"

' Another wild, passionate embrace, and all was over. In a minute later I was galloping far from the villa to reach the railway. I saw her beloved face no more ; but voice and face, eye and kiss, were all with me still. Would a time ever come when I might forget them ?

' Adverse winds detained us long in the Channel, but we cleared it at last ; and the last "Times" that came on board announced the marriage of this unhappy girl.

' Six months subsequent found me in cantonments at Neemuch, with a small detachment of ours, and in hourly expectation of the mutiny which had broken out at Meerut and Delhi, with such horrors, being imitated there, though we had sworn the Sepoys to be "true to their salt," the Mahometans on the Koran, the Hindoos on the waters of the Ganges, and the other darkies on whatever was most sacred to them ; and if they revolted, all Europeans were to seek instant shelter in the fort.

' It was the night of the 3rd June—one of the loveliest I ever saw in India—the moonlight was radiant as mid-day, and not a cloud was visible throughout the blue expanse of heaven. I was lying in my bungalow, with sword and revolver beside me,

as we could not count upon the events of an hour, for all Hindostan seemed to be going to chaos in blood and outrage.

' The cantonment gurries had clanged midnight ; my eyes were closing heavily ; and when just about to sleep I thought that my name was uttered by some one near me, very softly, very tenderly, and with an accent that thrilled my heart's core. Starting, I looked up, and there—oh, my God!—there, in the slanting light of the moon, like a glorified spirit, with a brightness all about her, was the figure of Eve Beverley, bending over me, with all her golden hair unbound, and a garment like a shroud or robe about her.

' Entranced, enchanted by love as much as by mortal terror, I could not move or speak, while nearer she bent to kiss my brow ; but I felt not the pressure of her lips, though reading in her starry, violet eyes a divine intensity of expression—a mournful, unspeakable tenderness, when, pointing in the direction of the fort, she disappeared.

' "It is a dread—a dreadful dream!" said I, starting to my feet, preternaturally awake, to hear the sound of artillery, the rattle of musketry, the yells of "Deen ! deen !" and the shrieks of those who were perishing ; for the mutineers had risen, and the 1st Cavalry, the 72nd N. I., and Walker's artillery, had commenced the work of massacre. I rushed forth, and at the moment I left my bungalow on one side it was set in flames and fired through from the other. I fled to the fort, which, thanks to my dream—for such I supposed it to be—I reached in safety, while many perished, for all the station was sheeted now with flame.

' Once again I had that dream, so

wild and strange, when a deadly peril threatened me. I was hiding in the jungle, alone and in great misery, near Jehaz-ghur, a fugitive. The time was noon, and I had dropped asleep under the deep, cool shadow of a thicket, when that weird vision of Eve came before me, soft and sad, tender and intense, with her loving eyes and flowing hair, as, with hands outstretched, she beckoned me to follow her. A cry escaped me, and I awoke.

“Was my Eve indeed dead?” I asked of myself; “and was it her intellectual spirit, her pure essence, that imperishable something engendered in us all from a higher source, that followed me as a guardian angel?” I remembered her parting words. The idea suggested was sadly sweet and terrible; and so, as a sense of her perpetual presence as a spirit-wife hovered at all times about me, controlling all my actions, rendered me unfit for society, till at Calcutta, a crisis was put to all this.

With some of the 72nd, and other Europeans who had escaped from Neemuch, or had “distinguished themselves,” as the “Hukkaru” had it, I once went to be photographed at the famous studio near the corner of the Strand. I sat, in succession, alone and in a group, after being posed in the usual fashion, with an iron hoop at the nape of my neck. On examining the first negative, an expression of perplexity and astonishment came over the face of the artist.

“Strange, sir,” said he; “most unaccountable!”

“What is strange; what is unaccountable?” asked several.

“Another figure that is not in the room appears at Captain Arkley’s back—a woman, by Jove!” he replied, placing the glass over a piece of black velvet; and there—there—oh, there could be no doubt of it—was faintly indicated the outline of one whose face and form had been but too vividly impressed on my heart and brain, bending sorrowfully over me, with her soft, bright eyes and wealth of long bright hair.

From my hand the glass fell on the floor, and was shivered to atoms. A similar figure, hovering near me, was visible among the pictured group of officers, but faded out. I refused to sit again, and quitted the studio in utter confusion, and with nerves dreadfully shaken, though my comrades averred that a trick had been played upon me. If so, how was the figure that of my dream—that of my lost love—who, a letter soon after informed me, had burst a blood-vessel, and expired on the night of the 3rd June, with my name on her lips?

Such was the story of Jack Arkley. Whether it was false or true, in this age of spiritualism and many other *isms* of mediums with the world unseen, and in which Enemoser has ventilated his theory of polarity, I pretend not to say, and leave others to determine. He became a moody monomaniac. I rejoined my regiment, and from that time never saw my old chum again. The last that I heard of him was, that he had quitted the service, and died a Passionist Father, in one of the many new monastic institutions that exist in the great metropolis.

NO INTENTIONS.

By FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,' 'VERONIQUE,' ETC.

CHAPTER II.

THIS abrupt and mysterious termination to a love-dream which he had once believed to be the keystone of his life has a great effect upon the bodily and mental health of Eric Keir. He becomes morose, absorbed, and melancholy; relinquishes the pursuits of which he had been most fond, and avoids the society of his friends. His altered behaviour excites much college talk, and all his former companions, save one, are full of conjecture as to the cause of it. That one is Saville Moxon, who alone believes he knows the reason of the change. He thinks that Eric Keir (notwithstanding his protestations to the contrary) has really been smitten, or at least on the high road to being smitten, by the charms of one or other of the pretty daughters of the Vicar of Fretterley; has given up the pursuit at the expostulation of his friend, and is suffering, by a very natural reaction, for his voluntary sacrifice. Saville Moxon knows as much about it as any of the others.

After a month of silence and suspense, during which, strange to say, Eric Keir, in all his misery, finds a sense of relief at not being obliged to pay those secret visits to Fretterley, old Margaret is dismissed, the cottage given up, and its contents scattered by the hammer, but the memory of the days he has spent there does not pass so easily from the young man's mind. Rather it takes root and poisons his existence, like an unextracted barb, so that he looks five years older in as

many months, and loses all the effervescence and hilarity of youth.

His brother and his friends persuade him, after all, to join their walking tour in Brittany, and when it is accomplished, Lord Muiraven and the Moxons return to England by themselves, having left Eric on the Continent.

'The boy has grown too fast and studied too hard,' says Lord Norham, in answer to the inquiries of anxious relatives; 'and a little relaxation will do him all the good in the world. I expect great things of Eric—great things—but I cannot permit his health to be sacrificed to my ambition.' In consequence of which, the Honourable Eric Hamilton Keir is lost to his mother country for two eventful years. Could he but have guessed how eventful!

At the expiration of that period we meet him again at a private ball in London.

It is the height of the season; the weather is warm, the room crowded, and every one not occupied in dancing attempts to find a refuge on the landing, or the stairs.

At the sides of the open door lean two young men, gazing into the ball-room, and passing their remarks on those they see there.

'Who is the girl that Keir's dancing with?'

'Keir! Where is he?'

'Coming down the left-hand side; the girl in black and gold.'

'Why, Miss St. John, of course!'

'And why of course? Who may Miss St. John be?'

'My dear Orme, if you're so lamentably ignorant, pray speak a little lower. Not to know Miss St. John argues yourself unknown.'

'Indeed! Well, she's uncommonly handsome. I should have no objection to number her amongst my acquaintances.'

'I should think not; she's the belle of the season, and only daughter of old St. John the banker, deceased.'

'Got any money?'

'Lots, I believe—any way, her face is a fortune in itself. It ought to command a coronet, as faces go nowadays.'

'And Keir, I suppose, is first in the field? Well! I am of a self-sacrificing disposition, and wish him good luck.'

'He would not thank you for it: he is sublimely indifferent to everything of the sort.'

'It does not look like it: I have seen them dancing together several times this evening.'

'Ah! that they always do; and I believe he is a constant visitor at the house. But if the St. John cherishes any fond hopes in consequence, I should advise her to relinquish them. Keir is not a marrying man.'

'It's early in the day to arrive at that conclusion.'

'My dear fellow! he makes no secret of his opinions—nor of his flirtations, for the matter of that. If he has one affair on hand, he has a dozen, and should Miss St. John discard him to-morrow morning, he would replace her in the afternoon.'

'You are not giving your friend a very enviable character,' remarks Mr. Orme, who is a young man of a moral and sententious turn of mind, and takes everything *au grand sérieux*.

'Can't possibly give him what he hasn't got,' replies the other,

laughing; 'and he would be the first to tell you so. Keir's an excellent fellow with men, and a general favourite; but he is certainly heartless where women are concerned, or callous. I hardly know which to call it. He has been terribly spoilt, you see, both at home and abroad; he will view life and its responsibilities with clearer eyes ten years hence.'

There is a general crush round the doorway, and the conversation of the young men has been overheard by many, but to one listener only has it proved of engrossing interest. That one is Mrs. St. John, the widowed mother of the girl so freely spoken of.

Wedged in upon the landing, and forced to listen to the discussion against her will, she has drunk in with burning cheeks the truths so likely to affect her daughter's happiness; and, as soon as she finds it practicable, she creeps to a corner of the ballroom whence she can watch the conduct of Irene and Mr. Keir, and feverishly determine what course of action she is bound, in her capacity of guardian, to pursue respecting them.

Meanwhile the galop has ended, and Eric Keir leads his partner into an adjoining conservatory, which has been kept dim and cool and provided with couches for the rest and refreshment of the dancers.

There, whilst Irene St. John, flushed and excited, throws herself upon a sofa, he leans against the back of a chair opposite and steadfastly regards her.

'I am afraid I have quite tired you, Miss St. John; that last galop was a very long one.'

Eric Keir is greatly altered since the days when he paid those secret visits to Fretterley. Travel and time, and something more

powerful than either, have traced lines across his forehead and made his face sharper than it should be at four-and-twenty. But he is very handsome—handsome with the hereditary beauty of the family; the large sleepy, violet eyes and dark hair, and well-cut, noble features which the Norhams have possessed for centuries—of which the present Lord Norham is so proud; and the more so because they seem, in this instance, to have skipped over the hair to bestow themselves upon his younger brother.

And this handsome head is not set, as is too often the case, on an indifferent figure, but is carried upright and stately, as such a noble head should be. At least, so thinks Irene St. John, if no other.

'I am not so tired of dancing, as of attempting to dance,' she says, in answer to his remark. 'How cool and refreshing this little nook seems, after the crush and heat of the ball-room. Rest and quiet are worth all the glare and tumult of society, if one could but believe it.'

'That is just what I was going to observe: you have taken the sentence out of my mouth,' says Eric Keir. 'The pleasure of a few words exchanged with you alone, outweighs all the attractions of an evening's dancing.'

'I did not expect to hear you say so,' murmurs Miss St. John, with downcast eyes.

'Why not? Is the sentiment too high to come from a worldling's lips?'

'It is most likely to proceed from the lips of those who have encountered something to disgust them with the world. I hoped that your life had been all brightness, Mr. Keir.'

'It is too good of you even to have hoped. But why should I be exempt from that of which, by

your own argument, you must have had experience?'

'Ah! women are more liable to suffering, or they feel it more acutely—don't you think so? My poor father! it seems so short a time since he was here. Did I follow my own inclinations, I should not be mixing in the world, even now; and I often wish I had been firmer in standing out against the wishes of others.'

'Don't say that,' is the low-voiced rejoinder; 'had you refused to enter society, we might not have met! and I was just beginning to be presumptuous enough to hope that our friendship possessed some interest for you.'

'And so it does, Mr. Keir; pray don't think otherwise,' with a hot, bright blush; 'a few words of common sense are the only things which make such a scene tolerable to me.'

'Or to myself,' he answers, as he takes a seat beside her; 'the quickness with which we think and feel together, Miss St. John; the sympathy, in fact, which appears to animate us, is a source of unceasing gratification to me.'

She does not answer him; but the strains of the 'Blue Danube' waltz come floating in from the adjacent ball-room, and mingle with his words.

'I suppose the world considers me a happy man,' he continues, presently. 'I daresay that even my own people think the same, and will continue to do so to the end—what then? it makes no difference to me.'

How quickly a woman's sympathy catches light when it is appealed to on behalf of a man's suffering. She seems to think it so much harder that the rougher sex should encounter trouble than her patient self! Irene's eyes are full of tender, silent questioning.

'And you are not, then, happy?' they inquire.

'Can you ask the question?' his reply.

'You must have guessed my secret,' his tongue says; 'you are not an ordinary woman; you look below the surface.'

'I confess that I have sometimes thought—'

'Of course you have,' he interrupts her, eagerly. 'I have had trouble enough, God knows, and it will end only with my life.'

'Oh, Mr. Keir! you are too young to say that.'

'I am too old to think otherwise,' he rejoins, moodily; 'your trouble was not of your own seeking, Miss St. John—mine is; that makes all the difference.'

'It make it harder to forget, perhaps,' she answers, 'but not impossible. And you have so much to make life pleasant to you—so many friends—'

'Friends! what do I care for them, excepting one. Oh, Miss St. John! if you will not think me too bold in saying so, it is only since I met you that I have felt as if I really had a friend. The few months we have known each other seem like years in retrospection, though they have flown like days in making your acquaintance.'

'We have seen so much of one another in the time,' she murmurs, softly.

'Yes! and learnt more. Sometimes I can scarcely believe but that I have known you all my life. To feel you really were my friend would be to experience the greatest pleasure that this world still holds for me.'

'Why should you not feel so?'

The sweet strains of the 'Blue Danube' are being repeated again and again, but above the loudest of them she hears the fluttering of her own heart as she puts the question.

'May I?' laying his hand upon the one which lies upon her

lap: 'is it possible that you can take sufficient interest in such an insignificant person as myself as to promise to befriend him? Do know all that is implicated in that promise—the long account of follies and short-comings you will have to listen to, the many occasions on which you will be asked for counsel or advice, the numerous times that you will feel utterly tired of or impatient with me?'

'I am not afraid of that, Mr. Keir.'

'Why do you call me, Mr. Keir? Can we be real friends while we address each other so formally? Surely you are above all such prudery, or I am much mistaken in your character.'

'I am not a prude, or I think so; yet the name by which I call you can make no difference in my friendship.'

'But cannot you guess that I am longing to have the right to speak to you familiarly? *Irene*—it fits you perfectly. I never knew an Irene in my life before, yet I could not fancy you by any other name, for I learned to love its sound long before I had the hardihood to hope that its possessor would admit me to her intimacy. I shall be very jealous of our friendship, Irene.'

'But why should you be jealous?' she demands, in a low voice. Her speaking eyos are cast upon the ground. He can only see the long dark lashes that lie upon her cheeks, and the golden glory of her head, whilst the sweet soft notes of the music still steal in to fill up the broken pauses of the conversation.

'Because it is a sacred bond between us which no third person must intrude upon; and if it is a secret, so much the better; it will be so sweet to feel that we have anything in common. But if you admit another to your

friendship, Irene—if I hear any man daring to call you by your Christian name; if I see that you have other confidants whom you trust as much or more than myself, I—I—' waxing fierce over the supposition—'I don't know what I *should* do!'

His violence amuses her.

'You need not be afraid—indeed, you need not; no one of my acquaintance would presume to act in the manner you describe.'

'Then I am the first, Irene?'

'Quite the first.'

'So much the happier for me! But I wonder—I wonder—'

'What?'

'Whether you can be content with such a friendship as I offer you; whether it will be sufficient for your happiness.'

'How *exigeante* you must consider me!'

'Not so; it is I that deserve the name. Yet if—if, when we have grown necessary to each other—or, rather, when you have grown necessary to me—you should see some one whom you prefer—some one more attractive—more desirable than myself, and desert me in consequence, marry him, in fact, what shall I do?'

She is about indignantly to disclaim the possibility of such a thing, when she is interrupted by the entrance of her mother.

'Irene! what are you thinking of? Captain Clevedon has been looking for you the last half-hour. You know you were engaged to him for this waltz.'

The voice of Mrs. St. John, usually so sweet and low, especially when she is speaking to her daughter, has become too highly pitched in her anxiety, and sounds discordant. As she hears it, Irene, blushing all over, rises quickly from her seat.

'Have I been here long, mother? I have been talking, and did not think of it.'

'Then you should think of it,' retorts Mrs. St. John; 'or Mr. Keir—with a dart of indignation in his direction—' should think of it for you. It is not customary with you to offend your partners, Irene.'

'Is Captain Clevedon offended? I am so sorry. Take me to him, mother, and I will make the *amende honorable*.'

'I don't think you will have the opportunity. I believe he has gone home, where, indeed, it is high time we went also. Come, Irene!'

'I am ready, mother! Mr. Keir offers you his arm. No!'—as Eric Keir extends the other for her benefit—'take care of mamma, and I will follow; thank you!'

So they pass through the ball-room and descend the staircase, Mrs. St. John in dignified silence, and the young people with some amount of trepidation. Yet, as he puts Irene into the carriage, Eric Keir summons up sufficient courage to say—

'Shall I find you at home tomorrow afternoon, Miss St. John?'

She is about to answer timidly that she is not sure, when she is again interrupted by her mother.

'Yes, we shall be at home, and glad to see you, Mr. Keir;' at which unexpected rejoinder, Mr. Keir expresses his grateful thanks, and Irene, clasping Mrs. St. John's hand between both her own, lies back upon the cushions, and indulges in a rose-coloured dream of coming happiness.

At an early hour on the following afternoon, Eric Keir's horse stands at the door of Mrs. St. John's house in Brook Street. He enters hurriedly, with a bright look of expectation on his countenance, and without ceremony, turns into a sitting-room on the ground floor.

The servant who admitted him had scarcely time to close the hall door again, before the visitor has vanished from his view, and left him standing there, with the message that was evidently fluttering on his lips, still undelivered. But it is Irene's sitting-room, and Eric Keir is not disappointed in his hope of finding her in it—and alone.

'What will you say to me for so abrupt an entrance?' he exclaims, as she rises to welcome him. 'Does it come within the privileges of a friend to introduce himself, or must I wait, like any other man, until your funkey formally announces me? O, Irene! I have scarcely slept a wink all night.'

'What a lamentable confession!' she answers, gaily. 'If this is the effects of too much dancing, I must begin to assert my prerogative as chief counsellor, and order you to be more discreet in future.'

'Of too much dancing!' indignantly; 'you know, without my telling you, if my restlessness was due to that. O, Irene! I feel so happy!'

'And last night you felt so miserable.'

A cloud passes over the brightness of his face.

'I did. I felt wretched in looking back upon my past life: the remembrance of the trouble it has caused me, and the follies to which it has been witness, unnerves me. And my happiness to-day (if it can be called such), my light-heartedness rather, proceeds only from the knowledge that you promised to help me to forget it.'

She has re-seated herself by this time, and he takes a chair beside her.

'As far as it lies in my power,' she answers; 'but is it always necessary to forget in order to be happy?'

'In my case it is so: there is nothing left for me but forgetfulness—and your affection.'

'Was it a very great trouble, then?' she says, softly.

'So great, that it has destroyed all the pleasure of my youth, and threatens to do the same by the comfort of my age.'

'And a woman was the cause of it, I suppose.'

'Is not a woman at the bottom of all our troubles? Women are the ulterior causes of all pain and pleasure in this world—at least, for us. You have not lived nineteen years in it without discovering that, Irene?'

'No!'

'And so I look to a woman to cure me of the wound that a woman's hand inflicted; to restore to me, as far as possible, through the treasure of her friendship and her sympathy, the happiness which, except for my own mad folly, I might have aspired to—'

'If you please, sir, Mrs. St. John is in the library, and will be glad to speak to you as soon as you can make it convenient to see her.'

'Say I will come at once.'

On the entrance of the servant they have sprung apart as guiltily as though they had been lovers, instead of only friends, and as he disappears again, they look at one another consciously, and laugh.

'What a mysterious message!' exclaims Irene; 'is this leap year? Can mamma have any designs on you?'

'In the shape of commissions—what ladies have not? I am a perfect martyr to the cause. Whether owing to the respectability of my connections, or myself, I cannot say; but the number of notes I am asked to deliver, and Berlin wools to match, is perfectly incredible. But is this dear interview ended? Shall I not find you here on my return?'

'Perhaps you may; but perhaps, also, my mother will be with you. So you had better consider it at an end, lest you should be disappointed.'

'If it is at an end, you must bid me farewell.'

'Farewell,' she echoes, smilingly, as she extends her hand.

'Is that the best way you know how to do it?' he demands, as he retains her hand between his own.

'What a thorough Englishwoman you are, Irene; you would not relinquish one of the cold forms of society even where your feelings are most interested. Custom first, and friendship afterwards. Ah! you do not regard our compact in the sacred light that I do.'

He has drawn her closer to him as he speaks, and their faces are nearly on a level.

'Oh, Eric! how little you know me!'

The liquid eyes upraised to his, the parted lips, the trembling hand, which he still holds, appeal to him until he loses sight of self and the bitter consequences of indulgence, and remembers only that they are man and woman, and they stand alone.

'Darling!' he whispers, as he bends down and kisses her.

By the crimson flush that mounts to her forehead, and the abrupt manner in which she disengages herself from him and turns away, so that he cannot see her face, he fears that he has seriously offended her.

'Forgive me! I know that it was wrong, but I could not help it. Irene! say that you are not angry.'

'Oh, pray go to mamma! she will think it so strange—she has been waiting for you all this time.'

'I cannot go until you have said that you forgive me.'

'I do forgive you then; but—but—it must never be again.'

'Is that your heart speaking to mine, Irene? Well, I will not press you for an answer now; but grant me one favour—one token that you are not really angry with me. Be here when I return.'

And with these words he leaves her.

He finds Mrs. St. John restlessly pacing up and down the library, and appearing even more nervous than usual.

She is a frail, timid-looking woman, the very opposite of her high-spirited daughter; and as she turns at his approach, her very lips are trembling.

'How do you do, Mrs. St. John? I believe you wish to speak to me. A commission, of course. Well! I am quite at your service, from barley-sugar up to bank-notes. What a lovely morning we have had! I hope you are not much fatigued after last night's dissipation.'

His frank and unrestrained address makes the task which she has set herself more difficult; but she takes a chair and waves him to another, while she is vainly trying to find words in which to open the conversation naturally.

'I am quite well, thank you, Mr. Keir. Pray be seated. Yes, I asked to speak to you: it is rather a delicate business, and had I not great faith in you, it would be a very painful one; but—are you sure that you are comfortable?'

'Quite so, thank you, Mrs. St. John,' he answers, puzzled to imagine what possible connection his present comfort can have with the subject she is about to introduce.

'I am glad of it. It is so much more satisfactory to enter on a discussion when both parties are perfectly at their ease. I asked to see you, Mr. Keir, because—I suppose you know that I am the sole guardian of my daughter?'

'I believe I have heard Miss St. John mention the fact.'

'Yes, her poor father wished it, and though I am very unfit for such a position, I knew he must be the best judge, and so—but of course it leaves me without counsellors. Irene has no near relation but myself, and I have no male friends in England to whom I can apply for advice in any matters of difficulty.'

'If I can be of any use,' he interrupts, eagerly, 'or could procure you the information you require, Mrs. St. John, you must know that it would give me the greatest pleasure to do so.'

'Thank you very much, Mr. Keir—yes, you can help me—I am coming to that presently. But being, as I said before, the sole guardian of Irene's interests, you must perceive that it is my duty to be very careful of her—that I cannot be too careful—'

'Who could doubt it?' he answers, warmly.

'And you are very often in her company; you have been here a great deal, lately, Mr. Keir—you are at our house almost every day.'

'I beg your pardon.'

'I say that you are very intimate with Irene—rather too intimate, I think; though, of course, we have always been pleased to see you—but the world will talk, and young people's names soon get connected—and so I consider it my duty to ascertain——' here Mrs. St. John coughs twice, and swallows some fearful obstacle in her throat—'to ask you, in short, *what are your intentions respecting her?*'

The murder is out, and poor Mrs. St. John sinks back in her chair, pale and exhausted, as though her own fate depended on his answer.

'Intentions! my intentions!'

cries Eric Keir, starting from his seat.

The tone of surprise and incredulity in which he utters the words seems to put new courage into his listener; it arouses her maternal fears, and with her fears her indignation, and she answers, quickly—

'You cannot pretend to misunderstand my meaning, Mr. Keir—young as you are, you are too much a man of the world for that, and must know that if you are so constantly seen in the company of a young lady, people will begin to inquire if you are engaged to be married to her—or not.'

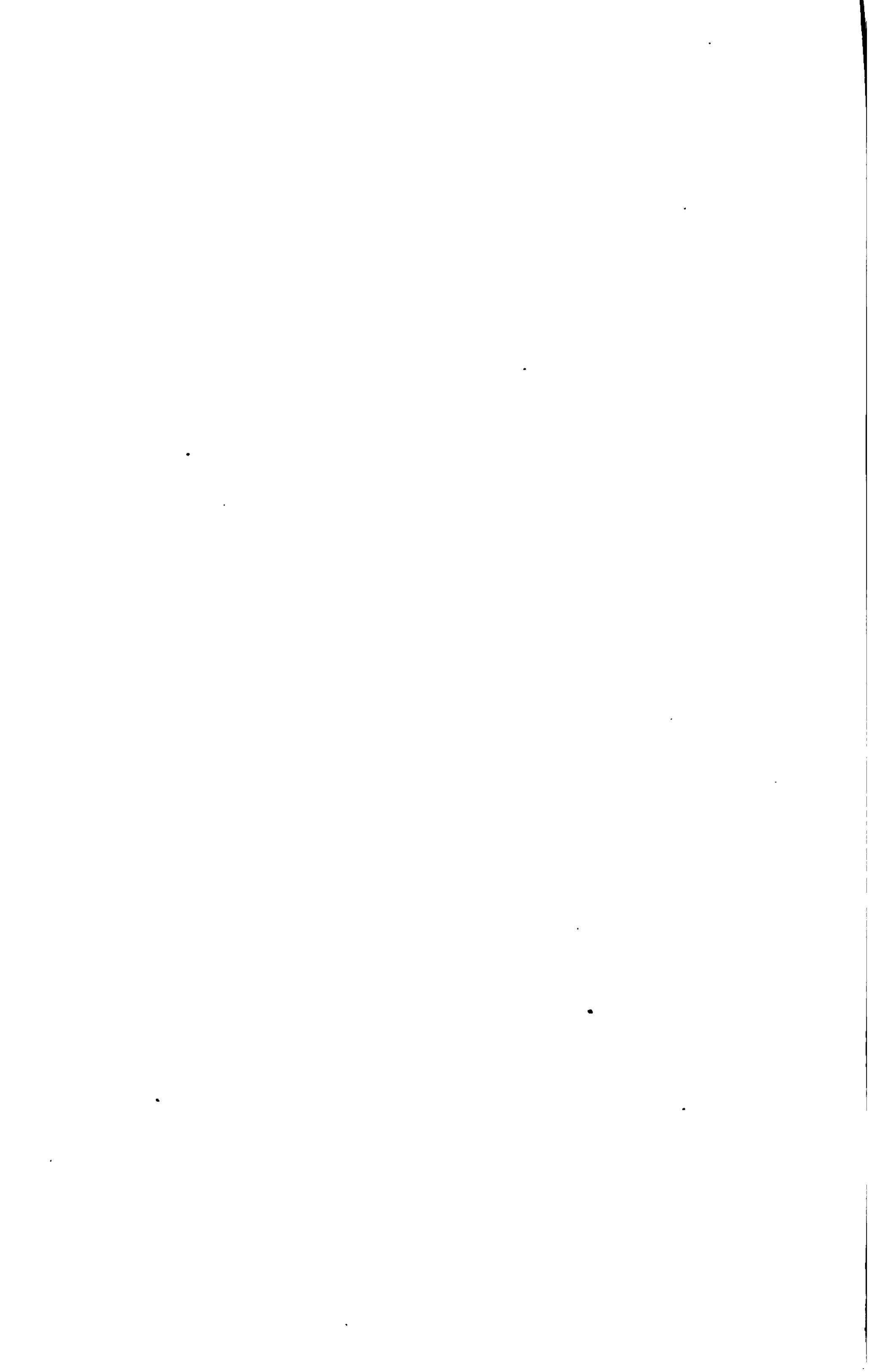
'I—I—know that I have trespassed very much upon your hospitality,' he commences, stammering, 'and taken the greatest pleasure in coming here, but I have never addressed Miss St. John except in the character of a friend, and I supposed that you entirely understood the footing on which I visited her.'

'And you mean to tell me,' exclaims the poor mother, who is shaking from head to foot with nervous excitement—'you intend me to understand, Mr. Keir, that all your attentions have meant nothing, and that my daughter is no more to you than any other girl?'

The whole truth flashes on him now; he sees the fraud of which he has been guilty, both to his own heart and to hers; he knows that he loves Irene St. John as his soul—and yet he is forced to stammer on—

'I never said that, Mrs. St. John. I hold your daughter too highly—much too highly, in my admiration and—and—esteem, and value her friendship too much, to be guilty of so false a sentiment. But as to marriage—deeply as I may, as I do, regret the necessity for saying so—I must tell you that it

NO INTENTIONS.



is not in my power at present to marry any one!'

'Not in your power! what do you mean?'

'I mean that, being but a younger son, I am not, unfortunately, in a position to take such a responsibility upon myself so early. If you knew my circumstances, Mrs. St. John, you would be the first person to refuse your daughter's hand to me.'

'What! as the younger son of the Earl of Norham? Mr. Keir, you are having recourse to a miserable subterfuge; you have been trifling with my child—you would not have dared to make so paltry an excuse to Irene's father.'

'Oh, Mrs. St. John! you do me wrong. I should have spoken just the same (I could have spoken in no other way) even to your husband. Yet had I pleaded a disinclination for marriage, you would have been no better pleased.'

'I have been foolish,' exclaims Mrs. St. John, trying hard to keep back the tears which she would consider it beneath her dignity to shed; 'I have been blind to allow your intimacy to go on so long—but I could not believe you would act so unworthy a part. My poor Irene!'

'Good God! Mrs. St. John,—with terrible emphasis—'you do not mean to tell me that Irene shares your suspicions—that she has learnt to regard me with any feeling warmer than the friendship we have pledged each other?'

'What right have you to ask, sir? What right have you to call her by her Christian name? I have not been accustomed to hear my daughter spoken of so familiarly by the gentlemen of her acquaintance.'

'Oh, Mrs. St. John! don't be hard upon me. Believe me when I say that in seeking the friendship of Miss St. John I had no

intention beyond that of deriving great pleasure and profit from our intercourse. I never dreamt that my actions would be misconstrued either by the world or yourself. I have never breathed a word to her concerning love or marriage—I *could* not have done it, knowing how impossible it is for me to redeem such a pledge, at present.'

'I hear your words, Mr. Keir, but I do not understand them. I only feel that you have been acting a very thoughtless, if not a dishonourable, part, and that it becomes my duty to see an immediate stop put to it. And, therefore, from the moment you quit this room, you must consider that our intimacy is at an end.'

At this intimation Eric Keir becomes visibly agitated.

'At an end! Do you mean to say that I am to see her no more—that my visits here are to cease once and for ever?'

'Of course they are! would you go on deceiving my poor girl, only to break her heart at the last?' cries Mrs. St. John, thrown off her guard by the vehemence of his manner. 'You little guess my love for her, Mr. Keir, if you think I would permit the happiness of her life to be wrecked in this manner.'

The timid, shrinking woman, who hardly speaks above a whisper in society, becomes quite grand and tragic in defence of her child. She reminds one of a dove-eyed, innocent ewe, advancing to the front of the flock to shake its hornless head and stamp its impotent feet because some passing stranger has dared to cast a glance in the direction of its lamb.

'Then she loves me, and you know it,' exclaims the young man, his eyes roused from their usual languor by the excitement of the suspicion; 'Mrs. St. John, tell me the truth; does Irene love me?'

'Do you intend to marry her?' demands the mother, fixedly. His eyes droop; silence is his only answer.

'O, Mr. Keir! I could hardly have believed it of you.'

'I ought not to have put the question. I have only tortured you and myself. But if you have any pity left for me, try to pity the necessity which forbids my answering you.'

'I think that our interview should end here, Mr. Keir. No good can be gained by my detaining you longer, and a further discussion of this very painful subject is only likely to lead to further estrangement. I must beg you, therefore, to leave this house, and without seeing my daughter again.'

'But who then will tell her of the proposed alteration in our intercourse?'

'I take that upon myself, and you may rest assured that Irene will be quite satisfied to abide by my decision. Meanwhile, Mr. Keir, if you have any gentlemanly feeling left, you will quit London, or take means to prevent our meeting you again.'

'Is it to be a total separation, then, between us? Must I have *nothing*, because I cannot take all?'

'I have already given you my opinion. Do not compel me to repeat it in stronger terms.'

Her voice and manner have become so cold that they arouse his pride.

'There is nothing, then, left for me to do but to bow to your decision. Mrs. St. John, I wish you a very good morning.'

He is going then, but his heart-strings pull him backwards.

'Oh! make the best of it to her, for God's sake! Tell her that—that— But no! there is nothing to tell her; I have no excuse—I can only go!'

He suits the action to the word as he speaks, and she follows him into the hall, and sees him safely out of the house before she turns the door-handle of her daughter's room.

Irene is sitting in an attitude of expectation, her hands idly folded on her lap, and fitful blushes chasing each other over her face as she listens to the foot-steps in the hall. When her mother enters she starts up suddenly, and then sits down again, as though she scarcely knew what she was doing.

'Is he gone?' she says, in a tone of disappointment, as Mrs. St. John advances to take her tenderly in her arms.

'And who may *he* be?' inquires the mother, with a ghastly attempt at playfulness, not knowing how to broach the intelligence she bears.

'Mr. Keir—Eric!—has he not been speaking to you? Oh, mother!' hiding her face with a sudden burst of shame on Mrs. St. John's bosom; 'I am not quite sure, but I think—I think he loves me!'

Mrs. St. John does not know what to answer. For a minute she holds her daughter in her arms and says nothing. Then Irene feels the trembling of her mother's figure, and looks up alarmed.

'Mother! is there anything the matter? Are you not well?'

'There is nothing the matter, my darling—at least, not much. But you were speaking of Mr. Keir—he is gone!'

'Gone—why?'

'Because he is not a gentleman, Irene.'

'Mother!'

'He is not worthy of you, child; he has been playing with your

feelings, amusing himself at your expense. Oh ! Irene, my darling ! you are so brave, so good. You will bear this like a woman, and despise him as he deserves.'

'Bear this ! bear *what?*' says the girl, standing suddenly upright ; 'I do not comprehend you, mother—I do not know what you are talking of.'

'I am talking of Mr. Keir, Irene. I am telling you that he is utterly unworthy of another thought from you—that he has dangled about you until the world has connected your names together, and that he has no intentions concerning you ; he has just told me so.'

'No intentions !' repeats her daughter, vacantly ; 'no intentions !'

'He has no intention of proposing to you, Irene—of marrying you ; he has meant nothing by it all.'

'Nothing !' repeats Irene, in the same dreamy way.

The lace-shrouded windows of the room are open, and the faint, rich odour from the boxes of stocks and mignonette that adorn its sills floats into the chamber, bringing with it a memory of hot-house plants, whilst band music from an adjoining square commences to make itself indistinctly heard.

'Yes, *nothing*,' continues Mrs. St. John, rendered bolder by her daughter's passiveness and her own indignation. 'I have just put the question to him—it was my duty to do so, seeing what marked attention he has paid you lately, and—I couldn't have believed it of Mr. Keir ; I thought so much more highly of him—he told me to my face that he had never even thought of you as anything but a friend. A friend, indeed ! Oh, my dearest girl ! that any man should dare to speak

of you in such terms of indifference—it will break my heart !' and Mrs. St. John attempts to cast herself into her daughter's arms again. But Irene puts her from her—repulses her—almost roughly.'

'Mother ! how *dared* you do it ?'

The words are such as she has never presumed to use to her mother before ; the tone even is not her own. Mrs. St. John looks up affrightedly.

'Irene !'

'How dared you subject me to such an insult—expose me in so cruel a manner ; make me despicable to myself ?'

'My child, what *do* you mean ?'

'Cannot a man be friendly and agreeable without being called upon to undergo so humiliating an examination ? Is a girl never to speak to one of the other sex without being suspected of a desire to marry him ? Is there to be no friendship, no cordiality, no confidence in this world, but the parties are immediately required to bind themselves down to an union which would be repugnant to both ? It is this style of thing which makes me hate society and all its shams—which will go far now to make me hate myself !'

'Irene ! my dear !' cries Mrs. St. John, trembling all over ; 'you do not consider that I am your guardian, and this precaution, which appears so unnecessary to you, became a duty for me to take. Would you have had me receive his visits here until he had entangled your affections more inextricably, perhaps, than he has done at present ?'

'Who says he has done so—who *dares* to say it ?'

The girl's pride is raging and warring within her. She has been roused from her tender love-dream by a stern reality, she is

quivering under the shock even as she speaks, but her first thought is to save her wounded honour.

'My Irene! I thought—I never dreamt but that you liked him—judging from the manner in which you received and spoke of him.'

'Liked him! Is liking, love? You judged me too quickly, mother. You have not read down to the depths of my heart.'

'You do not love him, then, my darling—this business will not make you miserable? Oh! Irene—speak! you cannot think what suspense costs me.'

The girl hesitates for a moment, turns round to see the frail figure before her, the thin clasped hands, the anxious, sorrow-laden eyes waiting her verdict, and hesitates no longer.

'I would not marry Eric Keir, mother, to-morrow for all this world could give me.'

'Oh! thank God! thank God!' cries Mrs. St. John, hysterically, as she sinks upon a sofa. In another moment Irene is kneeling by her side.

'Dearest mother! did I speak unkindly to you? Oh! forgive me! You know how proud I am, and it hurts me, just for the time being. But it is over now. Forget it, dear mother—we will both forget it, and everything concerning it—and go on as before. Oh! what a wretch I am to have made you weep!'

'I did it for the best, Irene. I only did what I considered my duty—it is a very common thing; it takes place every day. But so long as his conduct does not affect your happiness, there is no harm done.'

'There is no harm done,' echoes the girl, with parched lips, and eyes that are determined not to cry.

'It will put a stop to his coming here, and I daresay you will miss

him at first, Irene. Young people like to be together; but you must remember how detrimental such an intimacy would be to your future prospects; no one else would presume to come forward while a man like Eric Keir is hanging about the house: and I should never forgive myself if I permitted him to amuse himself at the expense of your settlement in life. He ought to know better than to wish such a thing.'

'He knows better now,' replied her daughter, soothingly.

'Yes—yes! if only he has not wounded you. O, Irene!' with a sudden burst of passion most foreign to her disposition, 'you are my only hope—my only consolation. Look me in the face, and tell me that you do not love him.'

'Mother, darling, you are ill and agitated; this wretched business has been too much for you. Go and lie down, dear mother, and try to sleep; and when we meet again we will agree to drop the subject altogether.'

'We will—we will. Heaven knows I am only anxious that it should be forgotten—only tell me Irene that you do not love him.'

She clings to her daughter—she will not be gainsaid; her eyes are fixed searchingly upon Irene's—the girl feels like a stag at bay; one moment she longs to pour out the truth—the next death would not tear it from her.

'I do not love him!' she answers, with closed teeth.

'Say it again!' exclaims Mrs. St. John, with a feverish burst of joy.

'I do not love him! Mother, is not that enough?' she goes on rapidly. 'Why should you doubt my word? Go, dear mother; pray go and take the rest you need, and leave me to—to—myself!'

She pushes Mrs. St. John gently.

but forcibly from the apartment, and locks the door. Then she staggers to the table, blindly, gropingly, and leans her back against it, grasping the edges with her hands.

'The first lie that I have ever told her,' she whispers to herself; 'the first lie—and yet, is it a lie? do I love him—or do I hate him?'

She stands for a minute hard as stone, her nervous hands grasping the table, her firm teeth pressed upon her lower lip, as though defying it to quiver, whilst all that Eric Keir has ever said to her comes rushing back upon her mind.

The scent of the stocks and mimionette is wafted past her with every breath that stirs the curtains: the band in the adjacent square has altered its position; it draws nearer—changes its air—the notes of the 'Blue Danube' waltz come floating through the open window. It is the last stroke of memory—all her determination fades before it.

'God help me!' she cries, as she sinks, sobbing, on the sofa.

Mrs. St. John is bound to believe what her daughter tells her; but she is not satisfied about her daughter's health. The season goes on—Irene does not fail to fulfil one engagement—she dresses and dances and talks gaily as before, and yet there is a something—undistinguishable, perhaps, except to the eye of affection—that makes her unlike her former self.

She is harder than she used to be—more cynical—less open to belief in truth and virtue.

Added to which, her appetite is variable, and she drinks wine feverishly—almost eagerly—and at odd intervals of time. Mrs. St. John calls in her favourite doctor,

Mr. Pettingall. Mr. Pettingall is not a fashionable physician, he is an old family doctor; he has known Irene since her birth, and is as well acquainted with her constitution as with that of his own wife. He settles the question on the first interview.

'Depression of the vital powers, Mrs. St. John, caused by undue excitement and fatigue. Your young lady has been going a little too fast this season. She has been sitting up too late, and dancing too much; perhaps, also, flirting too much. Nothing the matter with the heart, I suppose, eh?'

'Oh, dear no, Doctor! at least, Irene assures me it is not the case, though her spirits are certainly very variable.'

'No sign at all! A life of dissipation is sure to make the spirits variable. Take her away, and she'll be well in a month.'

'Away, Doctor! what before the season is over?'

'Certainly; unless you wish her health to be over with the season. And a change will do you no harm either, Mrs. St. John. Why, you want twice as much doctoring as your daughter.'

'That's what I tell mamma,' exclaims Irene, who has entered during the last sentence; 'but she will not believe me. Let us join cause against her, Mr. Pettingall, and get her out of this hateful London.'

'Why, my dear! would you really like to go?' says Mrs. St. John.'

'I would like to go anywhere, to see you strong again, mother.'

'That's right! a good daughter is the best medicine a mother can have. You hear what Miss St. John says, madam. She will go anywhere to do you good—and herself too!'

'She has always been my comfort!' murmurs Mrs. St. John.

'And I, as your medical adviser, recommend a trip abroad.'

'Abroad!'

'Certainly. Three or four months' run in the Austrian Tyrol, for instance—or the Pyrenees. Please yourselves, however, and you'll please me—only get out of London. It is quite as necessary for your health, Mrs. St. John, as for your daughter's.'

'Mother! we will go at once. We will not delay a day longer than is necessary. Thank you, Mr. Pettingall, for speaking out your mind so frankly. I have been blind not to see before that my mother wanted change.'

From that moment Irene comes out of herself, and takes all necessary cares and arrangements on her own hands. She forgets her trouble—her haunting regret; her only wish is to see her mother's health restored.

'I have been selfish,' she thinks, as she moves about from room to room giving the final orders for their departure. 'I have been so anxious to forget my own misery that I have dragged my poor mother out much more than is good for her—and this is the end of it. Oh! if I should have really upset her health—if this change should even prove too late! Good God! how shall I ever forgive myself—or him!'

She has not seen him since the interview he had with Mrs. St. John: she has gone out each evening feverishly expectant of his presence; longing, yet dreading, to encounter him: and she has dragged out the weary time with a heart of lead in her bosom, because he has never come—being, in point of fact, hundreds of miles away at his father's seat in Scotland, though no one tells her so.

'Afraid to meet me!' she has thought bitterly. 'Yes, fear was about the last ingredient wanting

in his cup of dishonour. How could I ever have been so mad as to think he loved me?'

The first place they try for change of air is Rochefort, in the Ardennes.

A lovely fertile valley, surrounded by heather-covered hills, the slopes of which are alive with wild blossoms, and the feet watered by clear streams, repose and peace seem to be the natural characteristics, the inevitable consequences, of a life in Rochefort.

But does peace come to the broken spirit more readily in quiet than in bustle? I doubt it.

What do we fly from, if not from memory? and can it come so closely to us in a crowd, where alien faces push between us and the semblance of the face we loved, and alien voices, clamouring for money or for interest, drown the sweet, false tones that poisoned our existence, as when we walk alone and weary on the footpath of life, too weary, it may be, even to have strength to push aside that which we dread to look on?

Irene finds it so. In London, amidst the whirl and turmoil of the season, she thought that she was strong enough to bear all things, even the knowledge—the bitterest knowledge to a woman—that she had given Eric Keir love in exchange for liking—fine gold for dross that tarnished at the first touch.

But here, in peaceful, slumbering Rochefort, she is fain to confess herself defeated. Here, where she can wander for miles without meeting a soul to break her solitude, his memory walks beside her like a haunting ghost from which she prays to be delivered.

Not mockingly nor coldly, not with a gesture or a look that can awake her pride, but as her heart

remembers him—as it had hoped he *would be*, until her overburthened spirit can bear the strain no longer, and she sinks down upon the grass, dappled with flowers and murmuring with insects, and prays God she may die.

Only to rise, when her moan is over, burning with indignation against herself and him; hating herself, perhaps, even more than him, for having sunk so low as to regret him. Mrs. St. John knows nothing of all this; she is too feeble to walk beyond a short distance, and Irene never appears before her except in good spirits and with a beaming countenance.

The mother is deceived—she feels her own health is failing, but she believes in the restoration of her child. Irene reads her belief, and is satisfied.

Nevertheless, as soon as the weather will permit them, she persuades Mrs. St. John to move on to Brussels. She knows that in order to keep up her rôle she must be moving; one more month of Rochefort and the ghost of Eric Keir, and she should break down entirely.

Brussels is full and gay; the September fêtes are going on, and the town is crowded. Mrs. St. John and her daughter take up their abode at one of the principal hotels, and prepare to enjoy life to the uttermost.

Enjoy life to the uttermost! I wonder which of us ever believes that he or she has reached the 'uttermost,' or, having reached it, how long we believe it to be such.

The 'uttermost,' if ever we attain it (how few do!), usually makes us so giddy we are not aware until we touch the bottom

of the ladder again how quickly we have descended.

Irene's uttermost at this juncture consists of running about to see all there is to be seen, and that is very soon brought to a close by Mrs. St. John's increasing weakness. She longs to accompany her daughter, but she cannot accomplish it, and the girl's solitary rambles through picture galleries and museums begin only too soon to assume the same character as her walks in Rochefort. She comes to understand that the companionship she needs is something more than is to be found in a strange crowd; it must be an active conversational presence—something that shall barter bright thoughts for her dull ones, and force her to exert her intellectual powers. A real wholesome want seldom arises in this world without the possibility of gratifying it. In a few days Irene finds the companion ready to hand.

She returns one afternoon to the hotel, after having permitted her feverish imagination to hold converse for hours with the fantastic horrors of Wiertz, and disturbs her mother in the midst of a conversation with a stranger—a gentleman of about fifty, or perhaps a few years older—whom Irene has never seen before.

She stands at the door for a moment irresolute, uncertain whether to enter or retreat, but Mrs. St. John catches sight of her.

'Irene, my darling!' she exclaims. 'I am so glad you are come home—only think! This gentleman is your nearest relation on your dear father's side—his cousin, Colonel Mordaunt; isn't it wonderful that we should have met each other here?'

Drawn by R. Caldecott.

ST. VALENTINE'S POST-BAG.

THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

CO-OPERATION AND THE WEST-END TRADESMEN—CURRENT SCANDALS—RUMOURED
EXTENSION OF THE DIVORCE ACTS—FORSTER'S LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS—
'CROMWELL' AT THE QUEEN'S THEATRE—ENGLISH DRAMATIC LITERATURE—
AN INTERCEPTED LETTER.

EARLY in the month of December last year, a sort of indignation meeting was held in London, composed of some six hundred retail tradesmen, Sir Thomas Chambers, Q.C., being in the chair. The object which brought these excellent people together was the wholesale denunciation of the Civil Service Co-operative Stores, and it is impossible to deny that there was an overwhelming unanimity of sentiment apparent in this imposing gathering. One and all condemned, without reserve, the warehouse in the Haymarket, and the chairman, by some process of reasoning which, let us hope, he will take an early opportunity of explaining in his place in Parliament, found himself compelled to describe the co-operative system as carried on by the civil servants as simply 'fraudulent trading.' The first impression created on the mind of the ordinary reader was, that the common sense of the Common Serjeant was engaged in bringing the object of the meeting to a *reductio ad absurdum*, for in no other way did it seem possible to account for his characterizing purchase in the cheapest market in such a manner; but on further reflection, there was no escape from the conviction that the learned chairman really meant what he said, and that his audience entirely agreed with him. A feeling of curiosity supervened, which gave way to a gasping amazement, when the reader came to understand that the meeting actually gave as its opinion, that, in this matter of Civil Service Co-operation, the Government

ought, in bounden duty, to interfere! The Government, that is, ought to prohibit its employés from combining together for the purpose of obtaining certain necessaries of life at as low a rate as possible! It is certainly somewhat startling to hear such a doctrine coolly—or, perhaps, one ought to say hotly—propounded in these days of recognised trades-unionism; and we naturally expect that some unanswerable arguments can be adduced in support of so astonishing a proposition. We find, however, that the reasons do not go beyond the statement of the fact that a formidable competition has been started, and that certain retail tradesmen find there is a woful falling off in their hitherto ample profits. Competition, however, is not unusually attended with some such results, and we cannot refuse to be aware that it is not a bad thing to break down monopolies, from which the general public is invariably the sufferer.

Now, 'fraudulent trading' is a strong expression, and Sir Thomas Chambers endeavours to justify his language by saying that all honest trading must show a 'living profit.' Well, the few co-operative societies do not trade at a loss, as far as we can learn from their published reports, and we may safely say that they would cease to exist if they were not profitable to the persons interested in maintaining them; so we need not distress ourselves about the use of a term which probably does more harm to the reputation of the gentleman who employed it than to those whose cause he de-

sired to damage. But we are further told that the whole thing is abominably unfair. Really, it is almost impossible to listen patiently to such an assertion. It is bad enough to be compelled to pay a commission to a broker if we wish to buy or sell shares in a railway or any other joint-stock enterprise, and to have an attorney's bill if we desire counsel's opinion on points of law, but we really cannot tolerate being told that we are not to buy our groceries and provisions except through the medium of a retail dealer. May we ask how our grocer supplies his own family? Does he give the same price that he charges his customers with, for his own soap and candles? Is there no such thing as 'trade price?' Does any one suppose that the bookseller's wife pays 31s. 6d. for a three - volumed novel? Does the wine-merchant pay four-and-twenty shillings per dozen for the Medoc he consumes at his own table? We all know perfectly well what the answer to these questions must be; and we are slowly beginning to see that, by a little management, we may honestly contrive to keep the profits in our own pockets, instead of handing them over to the shopkeeper. In short, we have learned by plain facts that the retail trade is, in the aggregate, a lucrative one, and, stimulated by the force of example, we, the public, are commencing to trade for our families upon our own account; and so it comes to pass, that we decline to make use of the agency of the shopkeeper.

Now, while we are willing to admit that this gradually strengthening position of common sense and economic qualities must be extremely detrimental to the tradesmen, we are compelled to deny that we see in it anything im-

moral or unfair. A grocer has no more right to complain of a co-operative association than he has of a rival grocer. He has no right whatever to say to his customers, ' You must buy at my shop, and it is extremely unfair of you to go straight into the wholesale market; you must give a certain price for the articles I sell, and it is dishonest of you to endeavour to obtain the same articles at a cheaper rate.' I put aside the special arguments used against the Civil Servants' Societies, for, whatever they may say, it is obviously the entire system against which the retail tradesmen are up in arms. There can be no manner of doubt that these persons are suffering severely; and it is more than probable that many of them are only just beginning to feel the sore. But surely they, of all people, ought to be aware that, in matters of pure business, of simple questions of supply and demand, there can be no room for sentiment. It has been justly observed, that their arguments might have been used with equal force on behalf of coach-proprietors and hotel-keepers as against the introduction of railways; and we know how violently the use of machinery was at first opposed in manufacturing districts. Social improvements are ever on the march, and the reign of tradesmen's large profits is drawing to its close; the Nemesis of long prices and long credits is at hand. Co-operation simply means *cash down*, and if tradesmen had always stuck to this simple rule, they would not have brought about this gigantic competition which now threatens them with annihilation; nor would their mistaken system have induced them to charge prices by means of which the honest and frugal customers have been made to pay for the sins of

the dishonest and extravagant. Let them lay this well to heart when they hold their next meeting under the presidency of the (apparently) sympathising Sir Thomas Chambers. And if any one should be tempted to exclaim that it is no use 'crying over spilt milk,' I trust that the chairman will have sufficient wit to reply that if people do *not* cry over spilt milk, they will be pretty certain to spill more. Co-operation is no unimportant item in the *Talk of the Town* in days like these, when prices have risen to an unparalleled height. We, the customers, have attained the knowledge that tradesmen have made large fortunes out of us, and we politely request them to try some other line of business, for we must decline to pay for their suburban residences and Sunday banquets any longer. Our tailor drives us in his brougham at Brighton; our haberdasher turns us into his showy furniture at his residence at St. John's Wood; our grocer drinks us in his champagne; our butcher eats us in his Welsh mutton; our greengrocer finds us far greener than the pale and flabby vegetables he condescends to supply us with; our milkman gives us liquid the sickliest cow would be ashamed to own; our wine-merchant gives us *vin ordinaire*, and makes us pay for first growth bottled at the *Chateau*; and our coal-merchant—well, I cannot trust myself to speak of him.

Though the season is only just at its commencement, the tongue of scandal has been unusually busy, and, not content with the some two hundred and fifty cases that are ready to satiate its unhealthy appetite in the Divorce Court, it has been greedy over two or three other tales, which, as

their scenes are laid in what is termed 'high life,' are surrounded with a more piquant flavour. Into all details it is not my intention to follow the light laugh of gossip, as my belief in blushes is not wholly shattered yet, and my respect for modesty still holds to the traditions I was taught in my youth. Yet, as I am a plain speaker, and as I write for '*London Society*,' I am compelled to say that such scandals as are known to have recently occurred are something more than disgraceful to a community that has hitherto held the highest position in the civilized world. From time to time certain outspoken and scathing articles have appeared in a weekly contemporary, and their evident object has been assailed as tending to cast a slur on the purity of English maids and matrons, and the justice of their arguments has been indignantly called in question. Facts, however, are proverbially stubborn things; and we have found ourselves reluctantly compelled to admit that the glory is a false one, which we have been accustomed to shed around our insular domestic life. For, although we are not yet in a position to carry away the palm of vice from our neighbours in Paris, it must be allowed that we are becoming dangerous rivals, and that the competition at the shrine of Venus is waxing warm. History teaches us that an age of unbounded luxury and self-indulgence in the annals of a people heralds their decline and downfall, and let us hope that it is not yet too late, that our moralists (if we have any) and our political economists (if a single practical man is to be found among them) will endeavour to stay the tide of licentiousness that threatens now to overwhelm us in its sweet but fatal wave. The

vitiated tastes of the lower classes of society may find their cure in education; but the corruption of an aristocracy excites a revolution as its remedy. Unfortunately, we have had recently only too many cogent proofs that men whose high position, and social acquirements, and hereditary wealth have placed them in a position to guide and govern, have cast all exalted principles and nobler aspirations to the winds, and have wasted their youth in immorality, their patrimony at the gaming-table and on the race-course, and their intellects in champagne and brandy. It may be said that such men are few and far between; but the world will argue that these are just the few, whose excesses have brought them notoriety; that there are many of their fellows who do not suffer their passions to go quite so far, and who have the wit to sin without being found out. Let the belief once gain ground that those who, by their birth, rank, riches, and education, ought to be the leaders of thought, whose leisure from actual toil, and freedom from pecuniary anxieties, fit them especially for pioneers in social improvements and national progress, are only luxurious and spendthrift Sybarites, and the voice of millions will condemn them as unworthy children of fortune; and the result will be the eruption of a volcano that will bury our social Pompeii in its inexorable lava. Oh, yes! you may smile, good, comfortable reader, and say that all this is common 'Daily Telegraph' sort of gushing; but I beg leave to assure you that the writer has eyes to see and ears to hear.

It is rumoured that an extension of the Divorce Act may soon be looked for. It is tolerably well

known in certain circles that if husband and wife find they do not get on so well together as in happier hours they had fondly anticipated, the getting up of evidence which will satisfy the judge and jury, and baffle the not particularly keen vision of the Queen's Proctor, is merely a matter of money and a temporary notoriety. In days when only a particular act of the legislature could put asunder those whom God had joined together, a divorce was a matter of some importance; but now that it can be settled as easily as any disputed contract in the courts of law, we are beginning to regard it as the sort of thing that may happen to anybody, and to wonder, perhaps, why it should not be more easily attainable. Darby and Joan may be blessed with equable temperaments, and may find no difficulty in jogging side by side along the rough and rutted roads of life; but Jack and Jill may find out, after a year or two's companionship, that they never made a greater mistake than in sealing their articles of association, and may feel that their company ought to be a limited one, as their liabilities far exceed the worth of their respective shares. In fact, incompatibility of temperament is fast rendering their joint lives intolerable, and they see no issue from their troubles save by the committal of crime, which is only punished by pecuniary fine. Our Divorce Laws, as they stand, are simply encouragements to break the seventh commandment; and some people are beginning to say, what they have long thought, viz.: that if we are to have divorce at all, we ought to have it upon easier conditions.

Yes, virtue is becoming old-fashioned, and vice wears such gay gilding, that the world is in

danger of thinking that what is new is best, and that all that glitters is gold; that the trials of life are best avoided, and that self-enjoyment is the one aim and object in this existence of three-score years and ten. Sad and dark will be the day for humanity when we have entirely divested ourselves of our mutual responsibilities, and when Society's motto is, 'Every man for himself, and God for none of us!'

Perhaps no better antidote for such poisonous reflections can be found than in perusing the two volumes of Mr. Forster's Life of Dickens. Critics who will insist upon finding fault with something, have complained that the biographer comes forward much too prominently in these pages, and that the reader is perpetually reminded that the compiler of the history of the Life of Dickens is a sort of benevolent Forster-brother, possessing admirable taste and tact, turning up at critical moments as the guardian angel of the sensitive and hard-worked novelist. In this complaint I am not disposed to join. The man who has had a keen personal participation in the life and thoughts of the author of 'Martin Chuzzlewit' may be pardoned for his pride. And, inasmuch as the biography is chiefly composed of letters to the biographer, it is hard to see how Mr. Forster could have suppressed himself as completely as some persons appear to wish. Some day, perhaps, an essay will be written upon the comparative merits of Bulwer Lytton, Thackeray, and Dickens, the three greatest novelists of our time; but, whatever may be the individual opinion of the future writer, the majority of readers will probably confess that Charles Dickens has most completely com-

manded our sympathies and engaged our affections; nor is it a rash prophecy to offer, that quotations from his writings will become as frequent and as enduring as quotations from Shakespeare. As the philosophic poetry, the grand colouring, the epigrammatic dialogue, the astounding knowledge of the human mind, displayed in the writings of the first of dramatists will stand for evermore unrivalled; so, probably, no novelist will ever touch our hearts so tenderly, or stir our sense of humour so deeply, as he who wrote 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' 'Dombey and Son,' 'David Copperfield,' and 'The Christmas Carol.' Pecksniff, Mark Tapley, Tom Pinch, Mrs. Gamp, Montague Tigg, Joe Bagstock, Mrs. Skewton, Paul, Micawber, Peggotty, and Scrooge have become indeed 'Household Words' among us, and long may they remain so. May the time never come when the honest indignation that shattered shams, and the power of ridicule that satirized with no unnecessary vituperation the follies and vices of the age, shall have lost its power over our better nature, or fail to rouse the generous passions of our hearts. And we must thank Mr. Forster for having so carefully preserved the correspondence which we now are permitted to read with so great an interest; for not only does it let us into the secrets of the master mind, but it enables us to re-read our favourite passages with fresh lights and invigorated sympathies. And when Mr. Forster's task is completed, we shall know and appreciate the terrible toil from which we, so unthinkingly, have reaped such wonderful amusement.

Last month I had occasion to offer a few observations upon Mr.

W. G. Wills' play, 'Charles I.', as represented at the Lyceum Theatre. I feel that I cannot now neglect to say a word or two about Colonel A. B. Richards' drama, entitled 'Cromwell,' produced at the Queen's Theatre towards the close of last year. This play was published some time before it had an opportunity of taking substantial form upon the stage, and the copies that went the usual literary round found decided favour in their critics' eyes. In fact, the play was so well spoken of, and so many regrets were publicly made that so excellent a piece had not been seized upon by any London manager, and dramatically represented for the benefit of paying and appreciative audiences, that we cannot feel any astonishment at its production by the energetic and enterprising, if not always successful, management of the Queen's Theatre. Indeed, if we might believe all we were told by Colonel Richards' critics, we might be pardoned for supposing that the 'coming man' had arrived at last, and that from the date of his advent a dramatic renaissance might be looked for. With deep and unfeigned regret, I am compelled to say that play-goers have been bitterly disappointed. Putting aside all silly sentimentalism, either on behalf of imperialists or republicans, we may aver that 'Cromwell' at the Queen's is as dull as 'Charles I.' at the Lyceum. Both plays have the same unfortunate defect. From scene to scene, and from act to act, no interest whatever is created in the minds of the spectators. While we willingly and most ungrudgingly allow that both plays are remarkable for their literary qualities, we must unhesitatingly affirm that neither are calculated to win for their authors any distinguished place among our English

dramatists. Both exhibit a total want of constructive ability, and ignorance of stage requirements. Both plays lack anything in the nature of a story which can hold the attention of the spectators; both are composed of scenes which, attractive as they may be of themselves, are, in fact, wholly unconnected with each other. The production of 'Cromwell' was undoubtedly looked forward to with no ordinary amount of interest in certain circles, as it was expected that the character of a man whom half the world regards as a hero would be redeemed from the low position into which the author of the play at the Lyceum had cast him. It was believed, possibly it was hoped, that the arch rebel might be made to command our sympathies as fully as the so-called martyr-king, and that the virtues of the patriotic brewer might be demonstrated as against the headstrong follies of the hereditary monarch. I am not disposed to deny that such expectations may be fulfilled by a quiet perusal of Colonel Richards' play as originally published; but, as it happens, that play becomes a very different thing when represented upon the stage. Not for one moment would I depreciate the very excellent acting of Mr. George Rignold in the character of the Protector—that talented and rising actor did all for the part that it was possible to do; but still the Cromwell that he gave us was not the Cromwell of our ideas. Nor should I wish Mr. Rignold for one moment to suppose that I am drawing an invidious comparison between him and Mr. Irving, when I say that his 'Cromwell' is not so satisfactory as Mr. Irving's 'Charles.' But it is a compliment to Cromwell to say that he is by no means as easily within the actor's reach as Charles; so let Mr. Rignold, if

he is inclined to be dispirited by the assertions of newspaper critics that he has not succeeded in 'creating' a part, consider that no one has yet triumphed where he has failed; and he may draw some comfort from the reflection that Colonel Richards did not write up the part for him, as Mr. Wills wrote up 'Charles' for Mr. Irving.

The production and success of these two plays—inadequate, from a dramatic point of view, as they unquestionably are—afford no small amount of comfort to the play-goer who delights in the exhibition of literary skill. I do not complain of sensational effects, for they are thoroughly legitimate, and can boast the most ancient precedents in their justification; all that we ask is that the dialogue by which they are surrounded shall be something more than merely commonplace. We require to be satisfied that the dramatic author has greater objects in view than striking incidents, and the formation of a tableau upon which the act drop may descend amid the applause of an unreflecting pit and gallery. We think that, in return for the high prices of admission which we pay, we have a right to expect that we are to have some dialogue worth listening to over and above the 'situations' we have to contemplate. English dramatic writers—it is strange to say so of a nation essentially undramatic—have long held a high position in dramatic literature, and we may be excused if we express a fear that their position is somewhat lower nowadays than it ought to be. Is it absolute want of originality, or merely laziness, that induces our authors to look so much to Paris? The latter excuse, let us hope; and so let London and provincial audiences encourage home pro-

duce, and, in spite of free trade principles—a little too free in literary matters, perhaps—give warm and honest welcome to all who desire to revive the literature of the English stage.

I picked up the following letter the other day in Pall Mall. As I have no means of discovering the owner by any interior evidence, I think I had better set it forth *in extenso*, so that the writer or recipient may recognize and claim.

'DEAR FITZ,

'I am sorry to say that we are so confoundedly hard-worked just now that there isn't a chance of my being able to get leave for a day or two, or I should much like to have a pop at the rabbits and a run with the Duke.' Not that there's really anything very pressing on hand, but the chief is positively alarmed about the anti-co-operative agitation! I'm not joking—it's a positive fact. We always knew he was rather a duffer, but we had good hopes of him, and never thought that it would come to this. I have reason to believe that the question was discussed at the Cabinet last week. Lowe, of course, said it was all d—d nonsense, and that nobody but a jumping idiot would even venture to hint at even a suggestion of legislative action. Gladstone is said to have shook his head at this, and murmured something about the unexplored by-paths of political economy. Perhaps he was thinking of the grand co-operation against Troy, and didn't approve of the principle which led to some gentlemen getting inside a horse and riding into Ilium. However, I believe the matter was adjourned *sine die*. What bothers them all so is the composition of the Queen's Speech for the opening of Parliament.

There isn't a single member of the ministry, in the Cabinet and out, that hasn't drafted two or three, but they can't find one which will fit. They are all dreadfully afraid that the "Pall Mall" will print its own and pretend it's theirs, as it did last year. They will have to say something about an amendment of the Licensing Act, and Local Taxation, but what worries them most is an Irish Education Bill. They can't very well shirk it this session. They know pretty well what they ought to do, but they daren't do it. Between you and me, Fitz, I never saw such a want of pluck as is exhibited by the administration of this celestial empire. I know that they want to make a Jonah of Ayrton, but the chief says he won't pacify either storm or whale, and it's better to stick to the old love, if you're not sure of being on with the new. I can't help thinking that the chief is rather afraid, if Ayrton is thrown to the whale as a Jonah, he himself will be thrown as a tub. The Premier, I fancy, is rather indifferent, on the whole; he firmly believes that the world can't get on without him, and that the country will very soon find out that its affairs will rapidly go to an everlasting smash if his position is trifled with. I tell you what, old fellow, we have got an awfully weak-kneed lot in Parliament just now. We want some new blood in the stock, and it is devoutly to be hoped that at the next election we shall get it. I can't help thinking that the British elector is a very tame and long-suffering sort of animal. At the same time, I fear that he is extremely unreflecting, and is too lazy to go into details as to the real fitness and capability of the individual he chooses to represent him in the House of Commons.

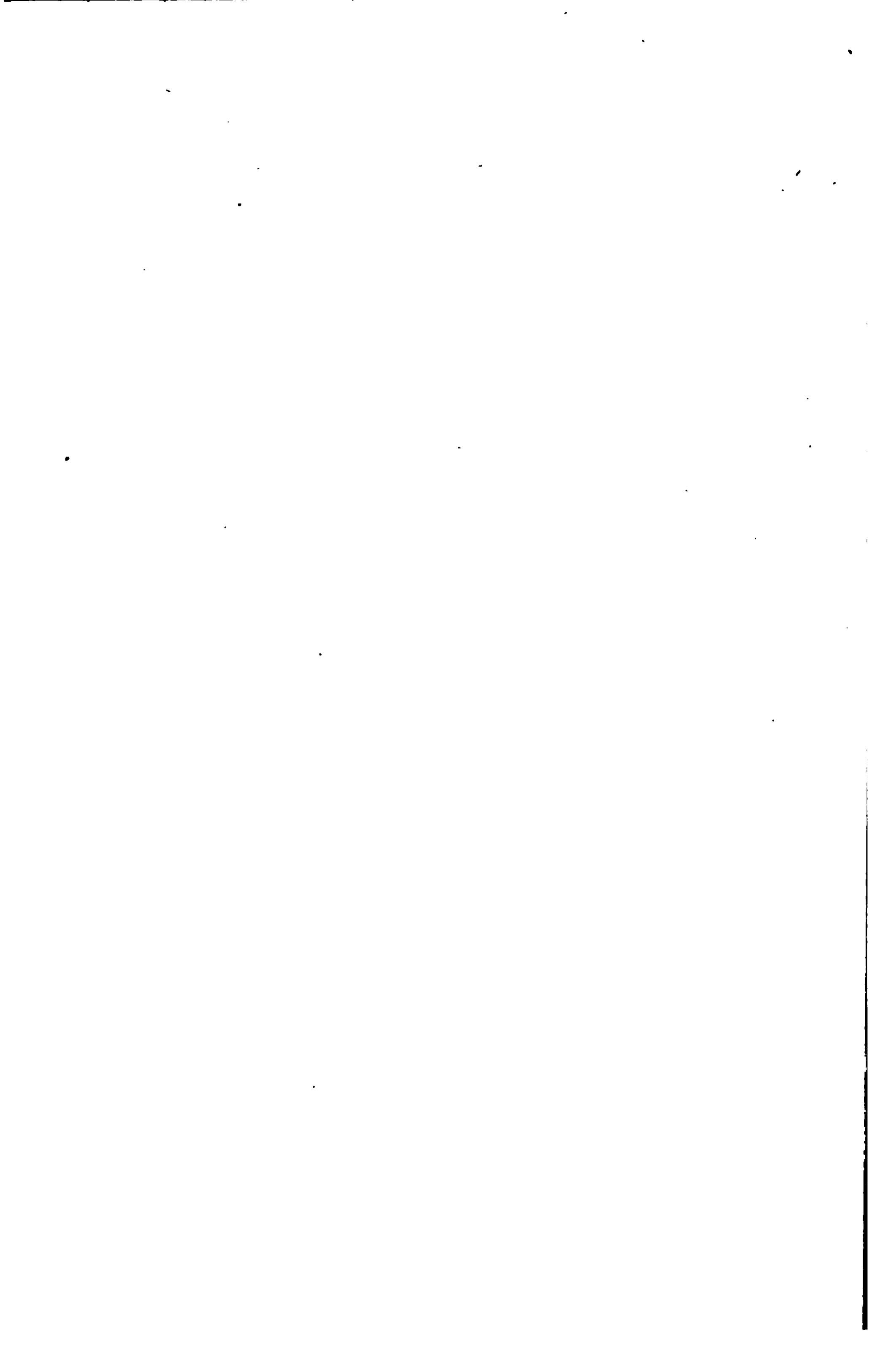
Once upon a time I used to wonder why the election agents who have been accustomed to pull the wires all over the country don't go in for seats themselves, and upon one occasion I ventured to suggest this to a veteran among them. "No, no! Thank God, I have not fallen so low as that yet!" was his pious reply. Think of this, my excellent Fitz, before you suffer yourself to yield to the solicitations of your noble relatives who, you have told me, are anxious that you should become a legislator for your country. Remember also that an Act of Parliament merely means increased profits in the pockets of the lawyers, in spite of the maxim, *Interest rei publice ut sit finis litium* (I hope the quotation is grammatically correct; it was "tunded" into me at some early period of my career). Was it not Talleyrand who said that language was invented for the purpose of concealing thoughts? A study of our statute books, and a perusal of, say a thousand or so of our law reports, will amply justify the epigrammatic remark.

'What a long letter I have written to you! I suppose a West-End tradesman would say that I am wasting public time. Well, I will try and make it up to him by now lunching at a public-house. I wonder if the said tradesman thinks I am wasting public money when I pay my tailor's bill? I'll make it up to him again, and let the little account stand over a little longer; for, of course, I can't do that sort of thing at the Co-operative.'

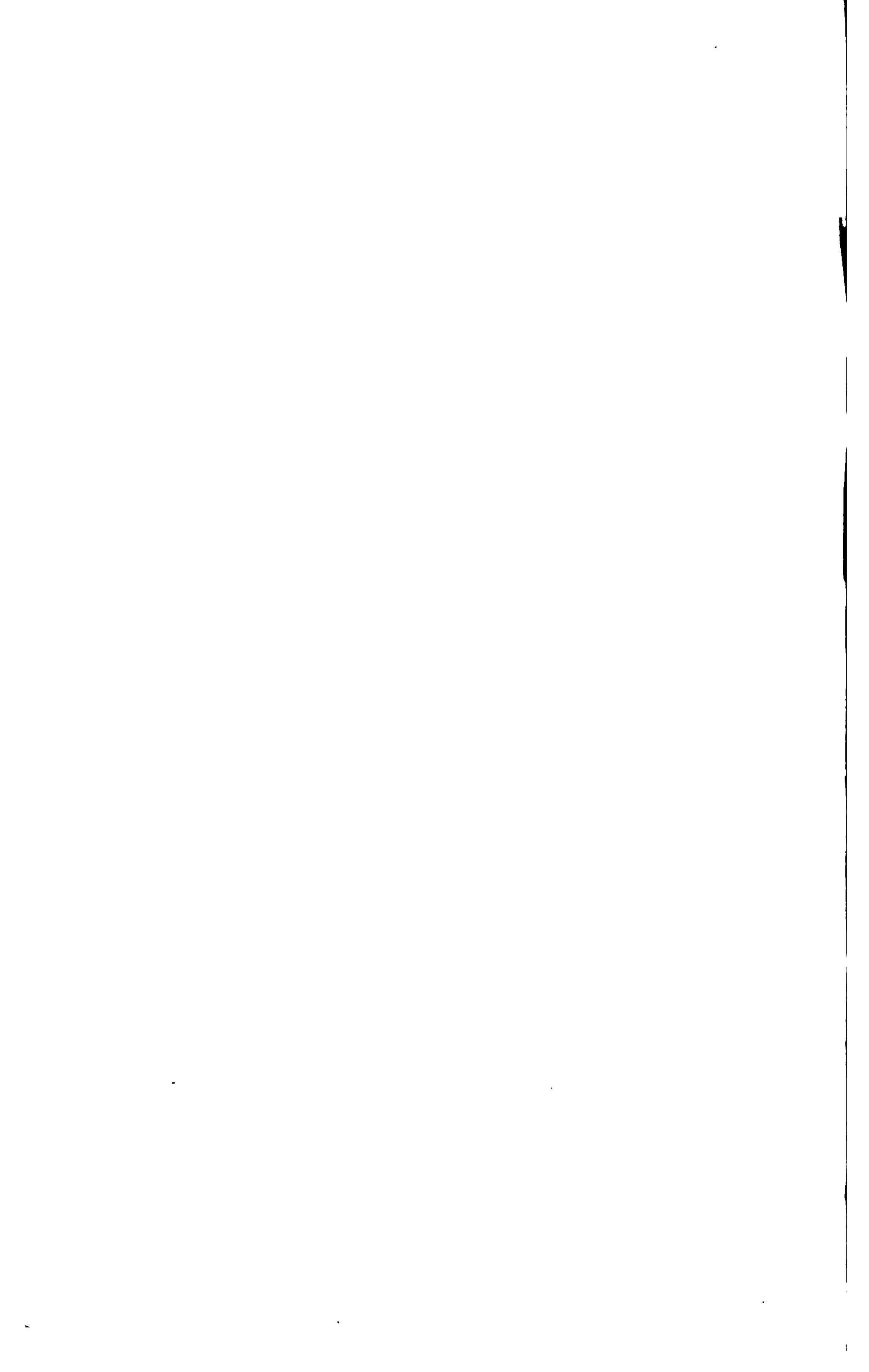
'Yours, as long as possible.
'JACK T.'

'Fitz' or 'Jack T.' can have the original of the above (after paying all expenses) on application to theirs very truly,

FREE LANCE.







LONDON SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1873.

A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

By CHARLES READE.

[*At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.*]

CHAPTER XIII.

HE told her he had come to thank her for her great kindness, and to accept the offer.

She sighed. 'I hoped it was to decline it. Think of the misery of separation, both to you and her.'

'It will be misery. But we are not happy as it is: and she cannot bear poverty. Nor is it fair she should, when I can give her every comfort, by just playing the man for a year or two.' He then told Lady Cicely there were more reasons than he chose to mention: go he must, and would; and he implored her not to let the affair drop. In short, he was sad but resolved, and she found she must go on with it, or break faith with him. She took her desk, and wrote a letter concluding the bargain for him. She stipulated for half the year's fee in advance. She read Dr. Staines the letter.

'You are a friend!' said he. 'I should never have ventured on that: it will be a godsend to my poor Rosa. You will be kind to her when I am gone?'

'I will.'

'So will Uncle Philip, I think. I will see him before I go, and

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shake hands. He has been a good friend to me; but he was too hard upon her; and I could not stand that.'

Then he thanked and blessed her again, with the tears in his eyes, and left her more disturbed and tearful than she had ever been since she grew to woman. 'Oh, cruel Poverty!' she thought: 'that such a man should be torn from his home, and thank me for doing it—all for a little money—and here are we poor commonplace creatures rolling in it.'

Staines hurried home, and told his wife. She clung to him convulsively, and wept bitterly; but she made no direct attempt to shake his resolution: she saw, by his iron look, that she could only afflict, not turn him.

Next day came Lady Cicely to see her. Lady Cicely was very uneasy in her mind, and wanted to know whether Rosa was reconciled to the separation.

Rosa received her with a forced politeness and an icy coldness that petrified her. She could not stay long in face of such a reception. At parting, she said, sadly, 'You look on me as an enemy.'

'What else can you expect, when you part my husband and me?' said Rosa, with quiet sternness.

'I meant well,' said Lady Cicely, sorrowfully; 'but I wish I had never interfered.'

'So do I,' and she began to cry.

Lady Cicely made no answer. She went quietly away, hanging her head sadly.

Rosa was unjust, but she was not rude nor vulgar; and Lady Cicely's temper was so well governed, that it never blinded her heart. She withdrew, but without the least idea of quarrelling with her afflicted friend, or abandoning her. She went quietly home, and wrote to Lady —, to say that she should be glad to receive Dr. Staines's advance as soon as convenient, since Mrs. Staines would have to make fresh arrangements, and the money might be useful.

The money was forthcoming directly. Lady Cicely brought it to Dear Street, and handed it to Dr. Staines. His eyes sparkled at the sight of it.

'Give my love to Rosa,' said she, softly, and cut her visit very short.

Staines took the money to Rosa, and said, 'See what our best friend has brought us. You shall have four hundred, and I hope, after the bitter lessons you have had, you will be able to do with that for some months. The two hundred I shall keep, as a reserve fund for you to draw on.'

'No, no!' said Rosa. 'I shall go and live with my father, and never spend a penny. Oh, Christie, if you knew how I hate myself for the folly that is parting us! Oh, why don't they teach girls Sense, and Money, instead of music, and the globes?'

But Christopher opened a banking account for her, and gave her a cheque-book, and entreated her

to pay everything by cheque, and run no bills whatever; and she promised. He also advertised the Bijou, and put a bill in the window: 'The lease of this house, and the furniture, to be sold.'

Rosa cried bitterly at sight of it, thinking how high in hope they were, when they had their first dinner there, and also when she went to her first sale to buy the furniture cheap.

And now everything moved with terrible rapidity. The 'Amphitrite' was to sail from Plymouth in five days; and, meantime, there was so much to be done, that the days seemed to gallop away.

Dr. Staines forgot nothing. He made his will in duplicate, leaving all to his wife; he left one copy at Doctors' Commons and another with his lawyer: inventoried all his furniture and effects in duplicate, too: wrote to Uncle Philip, and then called on him, to seek a reconciliation. Unfortunately, Dr. Philip was in Scotland. At last, this sad pair went down to Plymouth together, there to meet Lord Tadcaster and go on board H.M.S. 'Amphitrite,' lying at anchor at Hamoaze, under orders for the Australian Station.

They met at the Inn, as appointed; and sent word of their arrival on board the frigate, asking to remain on shore till the last minute.

Dr. Staines presented his patient to Rosa; and after a little while, drew him apart, and questioned him professionally. He then asked for a private room. Here he and Rosa really took leave; for what could the poor things say to each other on a crowded quay? He begged her forgiveness, on his knees, for having once spoken harshly to her, and she told him, with passionate sobs, he had never spoken harshly

to her; her folly it was had parted them.

Poor wretches! they clung together with a thousand vows of love and constancy. They were to pray for each other at the same hours: to think of some kind word or loving act, at other stated hours; and so they tried to fight with their suffering minds against the cruel separation: and if either should die, the other was to live wedded to memory, and never listen to love from other lips: but no! God was pitiful; he would let them meet again ere long, to part no more. They rocked in each other's arms; they cried over each other—it was pitiful.

At last the cruel summons came; they shuddered, as if it was their death-blow. Christopher, with a face of agony, was yet himself, and would have parted then: and so best. But Rosa could not. She would see the last of him, and became almost wild and violent when he opposed it.

Then he let her come with him to Milbay Steps; but into the boat he would not let her step.

The ship's boat lay at the steps, manned by six sailors, all seated, with their oars tossed in two vertical rows. A smart middy in charge conducted them, and Dr. Staines and Lord Tadcaster got in, leaving Rosa, in charge of her maid, on the quay.

'Shove off'—'Down'—'Give way.'

Each order was executed so swiftly and surely that, in as many seconds, the boat was clear, the oars struck the water with a loud splash, and the husband was shot away like an arrow, and the wife's despairing cry rang on the stony quay, as many a poor woman's cry had rung before.

In half a minute the boat shot under the stern of the frigate.

They were received on the quarter-deck by Captain Hamilton: he introduced them to the officers—a torture to poor Staines, to have his mind taken for a single instant from his wife—the first lieutenant came aft, and reported, 'Ready for making sail, sir.'

Staines seized the excuse, rushed to the other side of the vessel, leaned over the taffrail, as if he would fly ashore, and stretched out his hands to his beloved Rosa; and she stretched out her hands to him. They were so near, he could read the expression of her face. It was wild and troubled, as one who did not yet realize the terrible situation, but would not be long first.

'HANDS MAKE SAIL—WAY A-LOFT—UP ANCHOR'—rang in Christopher's ear, as if in a dream. All his soul and senses were bent on that desolate young creature. How young and amazed her lovely face! Yet this bewildered child was about to become a mother. Even a stranger's heart might have yearned with pity for her: how much more her miserable husband's!

The capstan was manned, and worked to a merry tune that struck chill to the bereaved; yards were braced for casting, anchor hove, catted, and fished, sail was spread with amazing swiftness, the ship's head dipped, and slowly and gracefully paid off towards the Breakwater, and she stood out to sea under swiftly-swelling canvas and a light north-westerly breeze.

Staines only felt the motion: his body was in the ship, his soul with his Rosa. He gazed, he strained his eyes to see her eyes, as the ship glided from England and her. While he was thus gazing and trembling all over, up came to him a smart second lieutenant, with a brilliant voice that

struck him like a sword, ‘ Captain’s orders to shew you berths: please choose for Lord Tadcaster and yourself.’

The man’s wild answer made the young officer stare. ‘ Oh, sir! not now—try and do my duty when I have quite lost her—my poor wife—a child—a mother—there—sir—on the steps—there! —there!’

Now, this officer always went to sea singing ‘ Oh be joyful.’ But a strong man’s agony, who can make light of? It was a revelation to him; but he took it quickly. The first thing he did, being a man of action, was to dash into his cabin, and come back with a short, powerful double glass. ‘ There!’ said he, roughly, but kindly, and shoved it into Staines’s hand. He took it, stared at it stupidly, then used it, without a word of thanks, so wrapped was he in his anguish.

This glass prolonged the misery of that bitter hour. When Rosa could no longer tell her husband from another, she felt he was really gone, and she threw her hands aloft, and clasped them above her head, with the wild abandon of a woman who could never again be a child; and Staines saw it, and a sharp sigh burst from him, and he saw her maid and others gather round her. He saw the poor young thing led away, with her head all down, as he had never seen her before, and supported to the inn; and then he saw her no more.

His heart seemed to go out of his bosom in search of her, and leave nothing but a stone behind: he hung over the taffrail, like a dead thing. A steady foot-fall slapped his ear. He raised his white face and filmy eyes, and saw Lieutenant Fitzroy marching to and fro like a sentinel, keeping everybody away from the mourner,

with the steady, resolute, business-like face of a man in whom sentiment is confined to action; its phrases and its flourishes being literally *terra incognita* to the honest fellow.

Staines staggered towards him, holding out both hands, and gasped out ‘ God bless you. Hide me somewhere—must not be seen so—got duty to do—Patient—can’t do it yet—one hour to draw my breath—oh, my God, my God! —one hour, sir. Then do my duty, if I die—as you would.’

Fitzroy tore him down into his own cabin, shut him in, and ran to the first lieutenant, with a tear in his eye. ‘ Can I have a sentry, sir?’

‘ Sentry! What for?’

‘ The Doctor—awfully cut up at leaving his wife: got him in my cabin. Wants to have his cry to himself.’

‘ Fancy a fellow crying at going to sea!’

‘ It is not that, sir; it is leaving his wife.’

‘ Well, is he the only man on board that has got a wife?’

‘ Why no, sir. It is odd, now I think of it. Perhaps he has only got that one.’

‘ Curious creatures, landsmen,’ said the first lieutenant. ‘ However, you can stick a marine there.’

‘ Yes, sir.’

‘ And I say, show the youngster the berths, and let him choose, as the Doctor’s aground.’

‘ Yes, sir.’

So Fitzroy planted his marine, and then went after Lord Tadcaster: he had drawn up alongside his cousin, Captain Hamilton. The Captain, being an admirer of Lady Cicely, was mighty civil to his little lordship, and talked to him more than was his wont on the quarter-deck; for though he had a good flow of conversation,

and dispensed with ceremony in his cabin, he was apt to be rather short on deck. However, he told little Tadcaster he was fortunate; they had a good start, and, if the wind held, might hope to be clear of the Channel in twenty-four hours. ' You will see Eddystone lighthouse, about four bells,' said he.

' Shall we go out of sight of land altogether?' inquired his lordship.

' Of course we shall, and the sooner, the better.' He then explained to the novice that the only danger to a good ship was from the land.

While Tadcaster was digesting this paradox, Captain Hamilton proceeded to descant on the beauties of blue water, and its fine medicinal qualities, which, he said, were particularly suited to young gentlemen with bilious stomachs: but presently, catching sight of Lieutenant Fitzroy standing apart, but with the manner of a lieutenant not there by accident, he stopped, and said civilly, but sharply, ' Well sir?'

Fitzroy came forward directly, saluted, and said he had orders from the first lieutenant to show Lord Tadcaster the berths. His lordship must be good enough to choose, because the doctor—couldn't.

' Why not?'

' Brought to, sir—for the present—by—well, by grief.'

' Brought to by Grief! Who the deuce is Grief? No riddles on the quarter-deck, if you please, sir.'

' Oh no, sir. I assure you he is awfully cut up; and he is having his cry out in my cabin.'

' Having his cry out! why, what for?'

' Leaving his wife, sir.'

' Oh, is that all?'

' Well, I don't wonder,' cried little Tadcaster, warmly. ' She is,

oh, so beautiful!' and a sudden blush overspread his pasty cheeks. ' Why on earth didn't we bring her along with us here?' said he, suddenly opening his eyes with astonishment at the childish omission.

' Why indeed?' said the Captain, comically, and dived below, attended by the well-disciplined laughter of Lieutenant Fitzroy, who was too good an officer not to be amused at his captain's jokes. Having acquitted himself of that duty—and it is a very difficult one sometimes—he took Lord Tadcaster to the main-deck, and showed him two comfortable sleeping-berths that had been screened off for him and Dr. Staines; one of these was fitted with a standing bed-place, the other had a cot swung in it. Fitzroy offered him the choice, but hinted that he himself preferred a cot.

' No, thank you,' says my lord, mighty drily.

' All right,' said Fitzroy, cheerfully. ' Take the other, then, my lord.'

His little lordship cocked his eye like a jackdaw, and looked almost as cunning. ' You see,' said he, ' I have been reading up for this voyage.'

' Oh, indeed! Logarithms?'

' Of course not.'

' What then?'

' Why, "Peter Simple"—to be sure.'

' Ah, ha!' said Fitzroy, with a chuckle that showed plainly he had some delicious reminiscences of youthful study in the same quarter.

The little lord chuckled too, and put one finger on Fitzroy's shoulder, and pointed at the cot with another. ' Tumble out the other side, you know—slippery hitches—cords cut—down you come flop, in the middle of the night.'

Fitzroy's eye flashed merriment: but only for a moment. His countenance fell the next. 'Lord bless you,' said he, sorrowfully, 'all that game is over now. Her Majesty's ship!—it is a church afloat. The service is going to the devil, as the old fogies say.'

'Ain't you sorry?' says the little lord, cocking his eye again just like the bird hereinbefore mentioned.

'Of course I am.'

'Then I'll take the standing bed.'

'All right. I say, you don't mind the Doctor coming down with a run, eh?'

'He is not ill: I am. He is paid to take care of me: I am not paid to take care of him,' said the young lord, sententiously.

'I understand,' replied Fitzroy, drily. 'Well, every one for himself, and Providence for us all—as the elephant said when he danced among the chickens.'

Here my lord was summoned to dine with the Captain. Staines was not there; but he had not forgotten his duty. In the midst of his grief he had written a note to the Captain, hoping that a bereaved husband might not seem to desert his post if he hid, for a few hours; the sorrow he felt himself unable to control. Meantime he would be grateful if Captain Hamilton would give orders that Lord Tadcaster should eat no pastry, and drink only six ounces of claret, otherwise he should feel that he was indeed betraying his trust.

The Captain was pleased and touched with this letter. It recalled to him how his mother sobbed when she launched her little middy, swelling with his first cocked hat and dirk.

There was champagne at dinner, and little Tadcaster began to pour out a tumbler. 'Hold on!' said Captain Hamilton. 'You are not

to drink that,' and he quietly removed the tumbler. 'Bring him six ounces of claret.'

While they were weighing the claret with scientific precision, Tadcaster remonstrated; and, being told it was the Doctor's order, he squeaked out, 'Confound him! why did not he stay with his wife?—She is beautiful.' Nor did he give it up without a struggle. 'Here's hospitality!' said he. 'Six ounces!'

Receiving no reply, he inquired of the third lieutenant, which was generally considered the greatest authority in a ship—the captain, or the doctor.

The third lieutenant answered not, but turned his head away and, by violent exertion, succeeded in not splitting.

'I'll answer that,' said Hamilton, politely. 'The captain is the highest in his department, and the doctor in his: now Doctor Staines is strictly within his department, and will be supported by me and my officers. You are bilious, and epileptical, and all the rest of it, and you are to be cured by diet and blue water.'

Tadcaster was inclined to snivel: however, he subdued that weakness, with a visible effort, and, in due course, returned to the charge. 'How would you look,' quavered he, 'if there was to be a mutiny in this ship of yours, and I was to head it?'

'Well, I should look sharp—hang all the ringleaders at the yardarm, clap the rest under hatches, and steer for the nearest prison.'

'Oh!' said Tadcaster, and digested this scheme a bit. At last he perked up again, and made his final hit. 'Well, I shouldn't care, for one, if you didn't flog us.'

'In that case,' said Captain Hamilton, 'I'd flog you—and stop your six ounces.'

'Then curse the sea; that is all I say.'

'Why, you have not seen it; you have only seen the British Channel.' It was Mr. Fitzroy who contributed this last observation.

After dinner all but the Captain went on deck, and saw the Eddystone lighthouse ahead and to leeward. They passed it. Fitzroy told his lordship its story, and that of its unfortunate predecessors. Soon after this Lord Tadcaster turned in.

Presently the Captain observed a change in the thermometer, which brought him on deck. He scanned the water and the sky, and, as these experienced commanders have a subtle insight into the weather, especially in familiar latitudes, he remarked to the first lieutenant that it looked rather unsettled; and, as a matter of prudence, ordered a reef in the topsails, and the royal yards to be sent down. Ship to be steered W. by S. This done, he turned in, but told them to call him if there was any change in the weather.

During the night the wind gradually headed; and at four bells in the middle watch a heavy squall came up from the south-west.

This brought the Captain on deck again: he found the officer of the watch at his post, and at work. Sail was shortened, and the ship made snug for heavy weather.

At 4 A.M. it was blowing hard, and, being too near the French coast, they wore the ship.

Now, this operation was bad for little Tadcaster. While the vessel was on the starboard tack, the side kept him snug; but, when they wore her, of course he had no lee-board to keep him in. The ship gave a lee lurch, and shot him clean out of his bunk into the middle of the cabin.

He shrieked and shrieked, with

terror and pain, till the Captain and Staines, who were his nearest neighbours, came to him, and they gave him a little brandy, and got him to bed again. Here he suffered nothing but violent seasickness for some hours.

As for Staines, he had been swinging heavily in his cot; but such was his mental distress that he would have welcomed sea-sickness, or any reasonable bodily suffering. He was in that state when the sting of a wasp is a touch of comfort.

Worn out with sickness, Tadcaster would not move. Invited to breakfast, he swore faintly, and insisted on dying in peace. At last exhaustion gave him a sort of sleep, in spite of the motion, which was violent, for it was now blowing great guns, a heavy sea on, and the great waves dirty in colour and crested with raging foam.

They had to wear ship again, always a ticklish manœuvre in weather like this.

A tremendous sea struck her quarter, stove in the very port abreast of which the little lord was lying, and washed him clean out of bed into the lee scuppers, and set all swimming round him.

Didn't he yell, and wash about the cabin, and grab at all the chairs and tables and things that drifted about, nimble as eels, avoiding his grasp.

In rushed the captain, and in staggered Staines. They stopped his 'voyage au tour de sa chambre,' and dragged him into the after saloon.

He clung to them by turns, and begged, with many tears, to be put on the nearest land; a rock would do.

'Much obliged,' said the captain: 'now is the very time to give rocks a wide berth.'

'A dead whale, then—a light-

house—anything but a beast of a ship.'

They pacified him with a little brandy, and for the next twenty-four hours he scarcely opened his mouth, except for a purpose it is needless to dwell on. We can trust to our terrestrial readers' personal reminiscences of lee lurches, weather rolls, and their faithful concomitant.

At last they wriggled out of the Channel, and soon after that the wind abated, and next day veered round to the northward, and the ship sailed almost on an even keel. The motion became as heavenly as it had been diabolical, and the passengers came on deck.

Staines had suffered one whole day from sea-sickness, but never complained. I believe it did his mind more good than harm.

As for Tadcaster, he continued to suffer, at intervals, for two days more, but, on the fifth day out, he appeared with a little pink tinge on his cheek, and a wolfish appetite. Dr. Staines controlled his diet severely, as to quality, and, when they had been at sea just eleven days, the physician's heavy heart was not a little lightened by the marvellous change in him. The unthinking, who believe in the drug system, should have seen what a physician can do with air and food, when circumstances enable him to enforce the diet he enjoins. Money will sometimes buy even health, if you avoid drugs entirely, and go another road.

Little Tadcaster went on board, pasty, dim-eyed, and very subject to fits, because his stomach was constantly overloaded with indigestible trash, and the blood in his brain-vessels was always either galloping or creeping, under the first, or second, effect of stimulants administered, at first, by thoughtless physicians. Behold him now—bronzed, pinky, bright-eyed, elas-

tic; and only one fit in twelve days.

The quarter-deck was hailed from the 'look-out' with a cry that is sometimes terrible, but in this latitude and weather welcome and exciting. 'Land, Ho !'

'Where away?' cried the officer of the watch.

'A point on the lee bow, sir.'

It was the island of Madeira: they dropped anchor in Funchal Roads, furled sails, squared yards, and fired a salute of twenty-one guns for the Portuguese flag.

They went ashore, and found a good hotel, and were no longer dosed, as in former days, with oil, onions, garlic, eggs. But the wine queer, and no *Madeira* to be got.

Staines wrote home to his wife: he told her how deeply he had felt the bereavement; but did not dwell on that; his object being to cheer her. He told her it promised to be a rapid and wonderful cure, and one that might very well give him a fresh start in London. They need not be parted a whole year, he thought. He sent her a very long letter, and also such extracts from his sea journal as he thought might please her. After dinner they inspected the town, and what struck them most was to find the streets paved with flag-stones, and most of the carts drawn by bullocks on sledges. A man every now and then would run forward and drop a greasy cloth in front of the sledge, to lubricate the way.

Next day, after breakfast, they ordered horses—these, on inspection, proved to be of excellent breed, either from Australia or America—very rough shod, for the stony roads. Started for the Grand Canal—peeped down that mighty chasm, which has the appearance of an immense mass having been blown out of the centre of the mountain.

They lunched under the Great Dragon Tree near its brink, then rode back admiring the bold mountain scenery. Next morning at dawn, rode on horses up the hill to the convent. Admired the beautiful gardens on the way. Remained a short time; then came down in the hand-sleigh—little baskets slung on sledges, guided by two natives; these sledges run down the hill with surprising rapidity, and the men guide them round corners by sticking out a foot to port or starboard.

Embarked at 11·30 A.M.

At 1·30, the men having dined, the ship was got under weigh for the Cape of Good Hope, and all sail made for a southerly course, to get into the N.E. trades.

The weather was now balmy and delightful, and so genial that everybody lived on deck, and could hardly be got to turn in to their cabins, even for sleep.

Dr. Staines became a favourite with the officers. There is a great deal of science on board a modern ship of war, and, of course, on some points Staines, a Cambridge wrangler, and a man of many sciences and books, was an oracle. On others he was quite behind, but a ready and quick pupil. He made up to the navigating officer, and learned, with his help, to take observations. In return, he was always at any youngster's service in a trigonometrical problem; and he amused the midshipmen and young lieutenants with analytical tests; some of these were applicable to certain liquids dispensed by the paymaster. Under one of them the port-wine assumed some very droll colours and appearances not proper to grape-juice.

One lovely night that the ship clove the dark sea into a blaze of phosphorescence, and her wake streamed like a comet's tail, a waggish middy got a bucketful

hoisted on deck, and asked the doctor to analyse that. He did not much like it, but yielded to the general request; and by dividing it into smaller vessels, and dropping in various chemicals, made rainbows and silvery flames and what not. But he declined to repeat the experiment: 'No, no; once is philosophy; twice is cruelty. I've slain more than Sampson already.'

As for Tadcaster, science had no charms for him; but Fiction had; and he got it galore; for he cruised about the forecastle, and there the quartermasters and old seamen spun him yarns that held him breathless.

But one day my lord had a fit on the quarter-deck, and a bad one; and Staines found him smelling strong of rum. He represented this to Captain Hamilton. The captain caused strict inquiries to be made, and it came out that my lord had gone among the men, with money in both pockets, and bought a little of one-man's grog, and a little of another, and had been sipping the furtive but transient joys of solitary intoxication.

Captain Hamilton talked to him seriously; told him it was suicide.

'Never mind, old boy,' said the young monkey; 'a short life and a merry one.'

Then Hamilton represented that it was very ungentlemanlike to go and tempt poor Jack with his money, to offend discipline, and get flogged. 'How will you feel, Tadcaster, when you see their backs bleeding under the cat?'

'Oh, d—n it all, George, don't do that,' says the young gentleman, all in a hurry.

Then the commander saw he had touched the right chord. So he played on it, till he got Lord Tadcaster to pledge his honour not to do it again.

The little fellow gave the pledge, but relieved his mind as follows: ‘But it is a cursed tyrannical hole, this tiresome old ship. You can’t do what you like in it.’

‘Well, but no more you can in the grave, and that is the agreeable residence you were hurrying to, but for this tiresome old ship.’

‘Lord! no more you can,’ said Tadcaster, with sudden candour. ‘I forgot that.’

The airs were very light; ship hardly moved. It was beginning to get dull, when one day a sail was sighted on the weather bow, standing to the eastward: on nearing her, she was seen, by the cut of her sails, to be a man-of-war, evidently homeward bound: so Captain Hamilton ordered the main-royal to be lowered (to render signal more visible) and the ‘Demand’ hoisted. No notice being taken of this, a gun was fired to draw her attention to the signal. This had the desired effect; down went her main-royal, up went her ‘Number.’ On referring to the signal-book, she proved to be the ‘Vindictive,’ from the Pacific Station.

This being ascertained, Captain Hamilton, being that captain’s senior, signalled ‘Close and prepare to receive letters:’ in obedience to this she bore up, ran down, and rounded to; the sail in ‘Amphitrite’ was also shortened, the main topsail laid to the mast, and a boat lowered. The Captain having finished his despatches, they, with the letter-bags, were handed into the boat, which shoved off, pulled to the lee side of the ‘Vindictive,’ and left the despatches, with Captain Hamilton’s compliments. On its return, both ships made sail on their respective course, exchanging ‘Bon Voyage’ by signal, and soon the upper sails of the homeward-

bounder were seen dipping below the horizon: longing eyes followed her on board the ‘Amphitrite.’

How many hurried missives had been written and despatched in that half hour. But as for Staines, he was a man of fore-thought, and had a volume ready for his dear wife.

Lord Tadcaster wrote to Lady Cicely Treherne. His epistle, though brief, contained a plum or two.

He wrote—‘What with sailing, and fishing, and eating nothing but roast meat, I’m quite another man.’

This amused her ladyship a little, but not so much as the postscript, which was indeed the neatest thing in its way she had met with, and she had some experience, too.

‘P.S.—I say, Cicely, I think I should like to marry you. Would you mind?’

Let us defy time and space to give you Lady Cicely’s reply. ‘I should enjoy it of all things, Taddy. But, alas! I am too young.’

N.B.—She was 27, and Tad. 16. To be sure, Tad. was four feet eleven, and she was only five feet six and a half.

To return to my narrative (with apologies), this meeting of the vessels caused a very agreeable excitement that day; but a greater was in store. In the afternoon, Tadcaster, Staines, and the principal officers of the ship, being at dinner in the Captain’s cabin, in came the officer of the watch, and reported a large spar on the weather bow.

‘Well, close it, if you can; and let me know if it looks worth picking up.’

He then explained to Lord Tadcaster that, on a cruise, he never liked to pass a spar, or any-

thing that might possibly reveal the fate of some vessel or other.

In the middle of his discourse, the officer came in again, but not in the same cool, business way: he ran in excitedly, and said, 'Captain, the signalman reports it alive!'

'Alive?—a spar! What do you mean? Something alive *on* it, eh?'

'No, sir; alive itself.'

'How can that be? Hail him again. Ask him what it is.'

The officer went out, and hailed the signal-man at the mast-head. 'What is it?'

'Sea sarpint, I think.'

This hail reached the Captain's ears faintly. However, he waited quietly till the officer came in and reported it; then he burst out, 'Absurd!—there is no such creature in the universe. What do you say, Dr. Staines? It is in your department.'

'The universe in my department, Captain?'

'Haw! haw! haw!' went Fitzroy and two more.

'No, you rogue, the serpent.'

Dr. Staines, thus appealed to, asked the Captain if he had ever seen small snakes out at sea.

'Why, of course. Sailed through a mile of them once, in the Archipelago.'

'Sure they were snakes?'

'Quite sure: and the biggest was not eight feet long.'

'Very well, Captain; then sea serpents exist, and it becomes a mere question of size. Now which produces the larger animals in every kind, land or sea? The grown elephant weighs, I believe, about two tons. The very smallest of the whale tribe weighs ten; and they go as high as forty tons. There are smaller fish than the whale, that are four times as heavy as the elephant. Why doubt, then, that the sea can breed

a snake to eclipse the boa constrictor? Even if the creature had never been seen, I should, by mere reasoning from analogy, expect the sea to produce a serpent excelling the boa constrictor, as the lobster excels a cray-fish of our rivers: see how large things grow at sea! the salmon born in our rivers weighs in six months a quarter of a pound, or less; it goes out to sea, and comes back in one year weighing seven pounds. So far from doubting the large sea serpents, I believe they exist by the million. The only thing that puzzles me is, why they should ever show a nose above water; they must be very numerous, I think.'

Captain Hamilton laughed, and said, 'Well, this is new. Doctor, in compliment to your opinion, we will go on deck and inspect the reptile you think so common.' He stopped at the door, and said, 'Doctor, the saltcellar is by you. Would you mind bringing it on deck? We shall want a little to secure the animal.'

So they all went on deck right merrily.

The Captain went up a few ratlines in the mizzen rigging, and looked to windward, laughing all the time: but, all of a sudden, there was a great change in his manner. 'Good Heavens, it is alive—LUFF!'

The helmsman obeyed; the news spread like wild-fire. Mess kids, grog kids, pipes, were all let fall, and soon three hundred sailors clustered on the rigging like bees, to view the long-talked of monster.

It was soon discovered to be moving lazily along, the propelling part being under water, and about twenty-five feet visible. It had a small head for so large a body, and, as they got nearer, rough scales were seen, ending in

smaller ones farther down the body. It had a mane, but not like a lion's, as some have pretended. If you have ever seen a pony with a hog-mane, that was more the character of this creature's mane—if mane it was.

They got within a hundred yards of it, and all saw it plainly, scarce believing their senses.

When they could get no nearer for the wind, the Captain yielded to that instinct which urges man always to kill a curiosity, 'to encourage the rest,' as saith witty Voltaire. 'Get ready a gun.—Best shot in the ship lay and fire it.'

This was soon done. Bang went the gun; the shot struck the water close to the brute, and may have struck him under water, for aught I know. Any way, it sorely disturbed him; for he reared into the air a column of serpent's flesh that looked as thick as the main top-mast of a 74, opened a mouth that looked capacious enough to swallow the largest bacoy anchor in the ship, and, with a strange grating noise between a bark and a hiss, dived, and was seen no more.

When he was gone, they all looked at one another, like men awaking from a dream.

Staines alone took it quite coolly. It did not surprise him in the least. He had always thought it incredible that the boa constrictor should be larger than any sea snake. That idea struck him as monstrous and absurd. He noted the sea serpent in his journal, but with this doubt, 'Semble—more like a very large eel.'

Next day they crossed the line. Just before noon, a young gentleman burst into Staines's cabin, apologizing for want of ceremony; but if Dr. Staines would like to see the line, it was now in sight from the mizen-top.

'Glad of it, sir,' said Staines: 'collect it for me in the ship's buckets, if you please. I want to send a line to friends at home.'

Young gentleman buried his hands in his pockets, walked out in solemn silence, and resumed his position on the lee side of the quarter-deck.

Nevertheless, this opening, coupled with what he had heard and read, made Staines a little uneasy, and he went to his friend Fitzroy, and said, 'Now look here: I am at the service of you experienced and humorous mariners. I plead guilty at once to the crime of never having passed the line; so make ready your swabs, and lather me; your ship's scraper, and shave me; and let us get it over. But Lord Tadcaster is nervous, sensitive, prouder than he seems, and I'm not going to have him driven into a fit, for all the Neptunes and Amphitrites in creation.'

Fitzroy heard him out, then burst out laughing. 'Why, there is none of that game in the Royal Navy,' said he. 'Hasn't been this twenty years.'

'I'm so sorry,' said Dr. Staines. 'If there is a form of wit I revere, it is practical joking.'

'Doctor, you are a satirical beggar.'

Staines told Tadcaster, and he went forward and chaffed his friend the quartermaster, who was one of the forecastle wits. 'I say, quartermaster, why doesn't Neptune come on board?'

Dead silence.

'I wonder what has become of poor old Nep?'

'Gone ashore!' growled the seaman. 'Last seen in the Rat-cliff Highway. Got a shop there—lends a shilling in the pound on seaman's advance tickets.'

'Oh! and Amphitrite?'

'Married the sexton at Wapping.'

'And the Nereids?'

'Neruds!' (scratching his head)

I hadn't kept my eye on them small craft. But, I believe they are selling oysters in the port of Leith.'

A light breeze carried them across the equator; but soon after they got becalmed, and it was dreary work, and the ship rolled, gently, but continuously, and upset Lord Tadcaster's stomach again, and quenched his manly spirit.

At last they were fortunate enough to catch the S.E. trade, but it was so languid at first that the ship barely moved through the water, though they set every stitch, and studding sails alow and aloft, till really she was acres of canvas.

While she was so creeping along, a man in the mizen-top noticed an enormous shark gliding steadily in her wake. This may seem a small incident, yet it ran through the ship like wild-fire, and caused more or less uneasiness in three hundred stout hearts; so near is every seaman to death, and so strong the persuasion in their superstitious minds, that a shark does not follow a ship pertinaciously without a prophetic instinct of calamity.

Unfortunately, the quartermaster conveyed this idea to Lord Tadcaster, and confirmed it by numerous examples, to prove that there was always death at hand when a shark followed the ship.

Thereupon Tadcaster took it into his head that he was under a relapse, and the shark was waiting for his dead body: he got quite low spirited.

Staines told Fitzroy. Fitzroy said, 'Shark be hanged! I'll have him on deck in half an hour.' He got leave from the Captain: a hook was baited with a large piece of pork, and towed astern by a

stout line, experienced old hands attending to it by turns.

The shark came up leisurely, surveyed the bait, and, I apprehend, ascertained the position of the hook. At all events, he turned quietly on his back, sucked the bait off, and retired to enjoy it.

Every officer in the ship tried him in turn, but without success; for if they got ready for him, and the moment he took the bait, jerked the rope hard, in that case he opened his enormous mouth so wide that the bait and hook came out clear. But, sooner or later, he always got the bait and left his captors the hook.

This went on for days, and his huge dorsal fin always in the ship's wake.

Then Tadcaster, who had watched these experiments with hope, lost his spirit and appetite.

Staines reasoned with him, but in vain. Somebody was to die; and, although there were three hundred and more in the ship, he must be the one. At last he actually made his will, and threw himself into Staines's arms, and gave him messages to his mother and Lady Cicely; and ended by frightening himself into a fit.

This roused Staines's pity, and also put him on his mettle. What, science be beaten by a shark!

He pondered the matter with all his might; and at last an idea came to him.

He asked the Captain's permission to try his hand. This was accorded immediately, and the ship's stores placed at his disposal very politely, and with a sly, comical grin.

Dr. Staines got from the carpenter some sheets of zinc and spare copper, and some flannel: these he cut into three-inch squares, and soaked the flannel in acidulated water. He then procured a quantity of bell-wire, the greater

part of which he insulated by wrapping it round with hot gutta-percha. So eager was he, that he did not turn in all night.

In the morning he prepared what he called an electric fuze—he filled a soda-water bottle with gunpowder, attaching some cork to make it buoyant, put in the fuze and bung, made it watertight, connected and insulated his main wires—enveloped the bottle in pork—tied a line to it, and let the bottle overboard.

The Captain and officers shook their heads mysteriously. The tars peeped and grinned from every rope to see a doctor try and catch a shark with a soda-water bottle, and no hook; but somehow the Doctor seemed to know what he was about, so they hovered round, and awaited the result, mystified, but curious, and showing their teeth from ear to ear.

'The only thing I fear,' said Staines, 'is that, the moment he takes the bait, he will cut the wire before I can complete the circuit and fire the fuze.'

Nevertheless, there was another objection to the success of the experiment. The shark had disappeared.

'Well,' said the Captain, 'at all events you have frightened him away.'

'No,' said little Tadcaster, white as a ghost; 'he is only under water, I know; waiting—waiting.'

'There he is,' cried one in the ratlines.

There was a rush to the taffrail—great excitement.

'Keep clear of me,' said Staines, quietly but firmly. 'It can only be done at the moment before he cuts the wire.'

The old shark swam slowly round the bait.

He saw it was something new.

He swam round and round it.

'He won't take it,' said one.

'He suspects something.'

'Oh yes, he will take the meat somehow, and leave the pepper. Sly old fox.'

'He has eaten many a poor Jack, that one.'

The shark turned slowly on his back, and, instead of grabbing at the bait, seemed to draw it by gentle suction into that capacious throat, ready to blow it out in a moment if it was not all right.

The moment the bait was drawn out of sight, Staines completed the circuit: the bottle exploded with a fury that surprised him and everybody who saw it; a ton of water flew into the air, and came down in spray, and a gory carcase floated, belly uppermost, visibly staining the blue water.

There was a roar of amazement and applause.

The carcase was towed alongside, at Tadcaster's urgent request, and then the power of the explosion was seen. Confined, first by the bottle, then by the meat, then by the fish, and lastly by the water, it had exploded with tenfold power, had blown the brute's head into a million atoms, and had even torn a great furrow in its carcase, exposing three feet of the backbone.

Taddy gloated on his enemy, and began to pick up again from that hour.

The wind improved, and, as usual in that latitude, scarcely varied a point. They had a pleasant time. Private theatricals, and other amusements, till they got to latitude 26° S., and longitude 27° W. Then the trade wind deserted them. Light and variable winds succeeded.

The master complained of the chronometers; and the Captain thought it his duty to verify or correct them: and so shaped his

course for the island of Tristan d'Acunha, then lying a little way out of his course. I ought, perhaps, to explain to the general reader that the exact position of this island being long ago established and recorded, it was an infallible guide to go by in verifying a ship's chronometers.

Next day the glass fell all day, and the Captain said he should double reef topsails at nightfall; for something was brewing.

The weather, however, was fine, and the ship was sailing very fast, when, about half an hour before sunset, the mast-head man hailed that there was a balk of timber in sight, broad on the weatherbow.

The signalman was sent up, and said it looked like a raft.

The Captain, who was on deck, levelled his glass at it, and made it out a raft, with a sort of rail to it, and the stump of a mast.

He ordered the officer of the watch to keep the ship as close to the wind as possible. He should like to examine it, if he could.

The master represented respectfully, that it would be unadvisable to beat to windward for that. 'I have no faith in our chronometers, sir, and it is important to make the island before dark: fogs rise here so suddenly.'

'Very well, Mr. Bolt; then I suppose we must let the raft go.'

'MAN ON THE RAFT TO WINDWARD!' hailed the signalman.

This electrified the ship. The Captain ran up the mizzen rigging, and scanned the raft, now nearly abeam.

'It is a man!' he cried, and was about to alter the ship's course, when, at that moment, the signalman hailed again:

'IT IS A CORPSE.'

'How d'ye know?'

'By the gulls.'

Then succeeded an exciting dialogue between the Captain and

the master, who, being in his department, was very firm; and went so far as to say he would not answer for the safety of the ship, if they did not sight the land before dark.

The Captain said, 'Very well;' and took a turn or two. But at last he said, 'No. Her Majesty's ship must not pass a raft with a man on it, dead or alive.'

He then began to give the necessary orders; but, before they were all out of his mouth, a fatal interruption occurred.

Tadcaster ran into Dr. Staines's cabin, crying, 'A raft with a corpse close by!'

Staines sprang to the quarter port, to see, and, craning eagerly out, the lower port chain, which had not been well secured, slipped, the port gave way, and, as his whole weight rested on it, canted him headlong into the sea.

A smart seaman in the fore-chains saw the accident, and instantly roared out, 'MAN OVERBOARD!' a cry that sends a thrill through a ship's very ribs.

Another smart fellow cut the life-buoy adrift so quickly that it struck the water within ten yards of Staines.

The officer of the watch, without the interval of half a moment, gave the right orders, in the voice of a stentor:

'Let go life-buoy.'

'Life-boat's crew away.'

'Hands shorten sail.'

'Mainsel up.'

'Main topsel to mast.'

These orders were executed with admirable swiftness. Meantime there was a mighty rush of feet throughout the frigate, every hatchway was crammed with men eager to force their way on deck.

In five seconds the middy of the watch and half her crew were in the lee cutter, fitted with Clifford's apparatus.

'Lower away!' cried the ex-

cited officer; ‘the others will come down by the pendants.’

The man stationed, sitting on the bottom boards, eased away roundly, when suddenly there was a hitch—the boat would go no farther.

‘Lower away there in the cutter! Why don’t you lower?’ screamed the Captain, who had come over to leeward expecting to see the boat in the water.

‘The rope has swollen, sir, and the pendants won’t unreeve,’ cried the middy, in agony.

‘Volunteers for the weather-boat!’ shouted the first lieutenant; but the order was unnecessary, for more than the proper number were in her already.

‘Plug in—lower away.’

But mishaps never come singly. Scarcely had this boat gone a foot from the davit, than the volunteer who was acting as coxswain, in reaching out for something, inadvertently let go the line which, in Kynaston’s apparatus, keeps the tackles hooked; consequently, down went the boat and crew twenty feet, with a terrific crash; the men were struggling for their lives, and the boat was stove.

But meantime, more men having been sent into the lee cutter, their weight caused the pendants to render, and the boat got afloat, and was soon employed picking up the struggling crew.

Seeing this, Lieutenant Fitzroy collected some hands, and lowered the life-boat gig, which was fitted with common tackles, got down into her himself by the falls, and, pulling round to windward, shouted to the signalman for directions.

The signalman was at his post, and had fixed his eye on the man overboard, as his duty was: but his messmate was in the stove boat, and he had cast one anxious

look down to see if he was saved, and, sad to relate, in that one moment he had lost sight of Staines: the sudden darkness—there was no twilight—confused him more, and the ship had increased her drift.

Fitzroy, however, made a rapid calculation, and pulled to windward with all his might. He was followed in about a minute by the other sound boat powerfully manned; and both boats melted away into the night.

There was a long and anxious suspense, during which it became pitch dark, and the ship burned blue lights to mark her position more plainly to the crews that were groping the sea for that beloved passenger.

Captain Hamilton had no doubt that the fate of Staines was decided, one way or other, long before this; but he kept quiet until he saw the plain signs of a squall at hand. Then, as he was responsible for the safety of boats and ship, he sent up rockets to recall them.

The cutter came alongside first. Lights were poured on her, and quavering voices asked, ‘Have you got him?’

The answer was dead silence, and sorrowful, drooping heads.

Sadly and reluctantly was the order given to hoist the boat in.

Then the gig came alongside. Fitzroy seated in her, with his hands before his face; the men gloomy and sad.

‘GONE! GONE!’

Soon the ship was battling a heavy squall.

At midnight all quiet again, and hove to. Then, at the request of many, the bell was tolled, and the ship’s company mustered bare-headed, and many a stout seaman in tears, as the last service was read for Christopher Staines.

MODERN MUSIC,

And some Modern Composers.

BY 'modern music' we may mean two things—modern as opposed to ancient, or the music of the day. So by 'the modern style of music,' we may mean two things—the style of composition, or the common and current interpretation of music in the modern drawing-room, by the modern young lady.

First let us hold our chat about that, and secretly think of our friends Miss Fortissimo, young Mrs. Adlibitum, and one or two other of our darling friends whom we kiss when we meet, and are an endless time taking farewell of, as if we were enacting the hackneyed line of the immortal playwright—

'Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That we could say good-night till it be
morrow.'

Our darling friends, whom nevertheless we begin to discuss and censure as soon as the lock is fairly turned upon them!

Decidedly the popular tendency of the instrumental music of the day is towards the German school—monotonous, hard, tuneless compositions; not that we mean to stigmatize the German school by such terms. The German school is heavier and less fanciful, yet less marked and less playful in melodies than the Italian. But it has given birth to some exquisite music. Simply to touch on the surface, and pass beyond drawing-room music, who amongst us does not at once think of Mendelssohn's exquisite, tear-exciting 'Leider ohne worte?' Who forgets Beethoven's 'Adelaide,' amongst vocal treasures? There are two other bright gems of song, whose melodies seem to fall upon our ears at this moment, and that are less

commonly known: 'On song's bright pinion,' a very Kohinoor of melody; a song to fill and expand the imaginative soul as she sings it, of a clear, rather high soprano; and the sweet conception sung by Madame Parepa, 'O bitt euch leibe vogeléen,' written to accommodate a mezzo-soprano to perfection. It is the imitators, the small fry of a school, that exaggerate its characteristics whilst they cannot give birth to its genius, and where they would copy, caricature. We have at the present moment rather a dearth of genius in the musical world. So the popular instrumental compositions may—perhaps severely, but nevertheless truly—be called abortions of the German school. But we do not quarrel with the composers. The phial of our wrath is all poured out on the poor drawing-room amateur performers. Miss Fortissimo, young Mrs. Adlibitum, and the 'male and female after their kind,' find no mercy at our hands.

The tendency of musical taste—want of taste, we should say—at the present moment is to show what wonderful difficulties young ladies from boarding-school, or just emancipated from the expensive thraldom of the guinea-a-lesson professor, who wears such immaculate broadcloth, such a diamond ring, holds his nose so very high in the air, and knocks so loud at the door that the invalid opposite always has a fit afterwards, and lets *pater* and *materfamilias* understand that he confers a favour almost equal to saving life in teaching their daughter; and who looks at his watch at every interval, coming always five minutes late, and going

ten minutes early, to economise the time of transit between pupils,—the young lady, we say, just emancipated from this expensive thraldom, rattles over the keys in a hard, monotonous manner, ‘The Mill Wheel,’ or some similar production, which you might tolerate if you thought corn was really ground in the process, and might make bread cheaper to the poor; or else gallops from end to end of the instrument, in the variations of Thalberg’s ‘Home, sweet home,’ and other compositions of a similar style, in a way you might fancy a regiment of dragoons at full charge on the enemy would scamper, the keys doing duty for the stone blocks of the road. Friends, acquaintance, and a select circle of guests listen, and cry out, ‘How wonderful! ‘Dear me! what difficult music your daughter plays!’

That is just it. The aim, the intention, the poetry of music is lost the moment it excites wonder, and betrays the *dux machina* by being palpably difficult to the hearer.

The purpose and charm of music is to soothe, to lull, to raise dreams of fancy, and, like poetry, to kindle the spark of sentiment, and to moderately excite and feed the passions.

The most wonderful execution in the world, in scrambling up and down the keys, will not do this. The Italian bravura [to trench on vocalization and the Italian school abruptly and together] will not do this. It is the pure, sweet air, not difficult to read, but wanting every delicate variety of touch—wanting the inspiration of the sweet soul that can speak through the fingers; it is the simple ballad, sung with a sweet, pure voice, and a natural, impassioned, but not an affected or theatrical, emotion,—it is these which charm.

Well, a pure, sweet voice is a

gift: everyone cannot have it. But everyone can play music, suggests a reader. We are not so sure of that. Anyone can be taught to overcome certain mechanical difficulties, and to achieve a certain mechanical performance on a given instrument; but everyone has not heart, soul, feeling, sensibility, romance—in a word, a poetical temperament: and it is only the poetical temperament which can give us music.

And yet, in spite of natural deficiencies and natural bent, cultivation and example do much for us. Man—and still more woman—is an imitative animal. Moreover, both love applause, and both will aim at acquiring that which will bring them popular applause, whether in private, of friends, or in public, of the million. Therefore it is that the tastes, or the supposed tastes of the day, govern the masses. We say supposed tastes advisedly, for it is a subtle question whether the taste of the day would not often appreciate much better things than are given to it, had it the choice.

Now, there is not the shadow of a doubt, that a person with a very moderate amount of musical education and skill may play an easy arrangement of a simple air, provided he or she has the refined taste and passionate sentimental feeling of the poet, in a manner to move the emotions of all hearers, and to give more real pleasure than the highly educated mechanical manipulist, who excites nothing but astonishment—no tears by pathetic melody, no absolute mirth and hilarity at the sound of some Scotch reel; who excites no sweet, half-sad memories of the past, by the tender delivery of some beloved air of ‘Auld lang syne.’ It is not how much we know; it is knowing what we do know well, that marks excellence.

Hence it is of great moment how the tyro is taught. Time is wasted, and worse than wasted, in taking steps that must be retraced, and acquiring bad habits that are easy to form, but hard to eradicate. There are persons who think that any low standard of teaching will do for 'beginners,' and a competent authority may be procured 'to finish.'

Those who possess a sweet voice, and know how to modulate it, have one of the greatest of all gifts. There are fanciful writers who scribble of the charms of uncultivated vocalization. It is simple nonsense. Here and there we find individuals of innate genius and taste, whose uncultivated efforts, far from rough, are better and more pleasing than the long-instructed achievements of numbers. Still there is always something crude, something wanting—a vacancy, as it were—in wholly untaught efforts. The person of taste and talents learns rapidly, and a little instruction teaches him or her more than a lifetime of plodding labour bestowed on a dullard. Many who have fine vocal powers are so devoid of taste and dense of comprehension, that a great amount of teaching does not produce perfection, and half-measures prove a total failure.

Now, to talk a little learnedly, and yet not pedantically, of modern music, we must at once run back to Haydn, who was the originator of the modern school of music. He it was who, without transgressing rules, broke the trammels of the stiff style of music. His writings are classical, but drawn with a free hand: he was a great genius who dared to utter compositions unfettered by the conventionalities of the day. 'The Creation' is one of the most striking monuments of his inventive skill, being more

fanciful, though less grand, than the 'Messiah' of Handel. Haydn's 'Heavens are telling' is a very fine composition. 'With verdure clad' is an example of his delicacy of treatment. Haydn's canzonettes are a valuable addition to the classical instrumental library, and are deservedly popular. Shall we ever weary of 'My mother bids me bind my hair,' or the more florid 'Mermaid's song?'

Before Haydn's time the musical world of amateur pianistes had to be satisfied with formal and heavy sonatas. In fact, the pianoforte was a comparatively new instrument, the offspring of the harpsichord, which was the daughter of the spinet, the lineal descendant of 'the virginals' on which Queen Elizabeth played at the age of four years, to the admiration of the French ambassador. Amateur music was limited to the few. Lord Chesterfield, in his day, had written that it was a vulgar and underbred thing for a gentleman or lady to perform on a musical instrument like a paid hireling. It took a considerable period to wear off such a feeling. Therefore pianoforte music fascinated the talent of but few composers, and with them was a secondary matter.

How differently wags the world now! Crowned heads, and princes and princesses of the royal blood, are proud of their skill in music. The children of our aristocracy delight in the display of their instrumental and vocal powers; and the modern pianoforte is, of all instruments, one of the chosen lares of home.

The compositions of the great Mozart are stiffer than those of Haydn; perhaps of all his works none has been more regarded than 'Die Zauber Flöte' (The Magic Flute). Wolfgang Gotlieb Mozart was the son of the sub-director of the chapel at Salzburg, in Ger-

many. As a child, his talent was so remarkable that he performed before the Emperor Francis I., and also before the whole French Court, and published his two first works anterior to the celebration of his eighth birthday. Subsequently, at the same age, in 1764, he performed in England before the royal family. At this wonderfully precocious age, Dr. Burney testifies that his writings, in point of sound composition, taste, invention, and modulation, were equal to those of the finest established composers, and his skill in extempore playing was no less. He married a celebrated singer, a Mademoiselle Constance Webber, an amiable woman, when he was twenty-three years of age. His death occurring at the premature period of thirty-six years, does not astonish us. The tropic plant that runs to flower in a day or two, runs to seed with equal facility. Mozart's greatest works are the operas of 'Don Giovanni,' 'La Nozze di Figaro,' and 'La Clemenza di Tito,' which is much less known.

Spoehr and Weber were composers of their day who followed in the footsteps of Haydn; but Weber, in such operas as 'Der Freischütz,' was too heavy for English taste.

And then we must chronicle the glorious name of Mendelssohn, who was a German Jew, as his name, which means 'son of Moses,' signifies; grandson of a man who gained some renown in literature for his theological and philosophical works. At the age of sixteen, Bartholdy Felix Mendelssohn distinguished himself as a composer by 'The Wedding of Camellio,' soon after which he produced his overture to Shakespear's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' In 1829, at the age of twenty, he first reached England, where his re-

ception induced him to reappear almost annually. In 1847 he conducted his oratorio of 'Elijah' in London, Birmingham, and Manchester.

Nothing is more remarkable than the very precocious age at which musical composers have distinguished themselves. Beethoven, a pupil of Haydn, at thirteen years old was capable of playing extempore fantasias that delighted musicians of talent. He was born at Bonn in 1770, and died in 1827. His writings are distinguished by great versatility of style; and, as our readers of course know, his symphonies take the highest rank of all modern classical compositions.

Another distinct class of modern composition is the waltz, of which the polka-mazurka is an offshoot —the waltz, *par excellence*, which is intended more as a pianoforte 'recreation,' than an accompaniment to the actual dance. It is a lighter and easier style of music, even in its most difficult arrangements, than such as we have been treating already. Waltz music requires a neat, light, precise staccato touch, and a great deal of spirit, vivacity, and wit, to render it well. Amongst a majority of players who can, after practice and education, render music accurately in all respects, and sometimes with great powers of execution, we only here and there find —and that as often among the partially educated as not—two kinds of talent: the poetry that portrays the music of the heart, and the wit, vivacity, and energy that gives life to the waltz style.

Lebitzky, Strauss, and Lanner were the first waltz writers; but their compositions, compared to more recent productions, are heavy, yet they are grand. To these men belong the glory of inaugurating a school which has

been as prolific as it seems suitable to the genius of modern composers. Waltz music is light, exhilarating, and festive, and fills a very pleasing niche in the temple dedicated to the sonorous art.

Rossini is another conspicuous modern composer who has followed in the footsteps of Haydn. Born at Pesaro, near Bologna, in 1792, the son of a strolling musician, the story of his career is another romance of real life. He had a fine voice, and was placed under an able tutor, and from twelve to fourteen years of age sang in the churches of his native place. In 1813, at twenty-one years of age, he wrote his celebrated opera of '*Tancredi*' '*Il Barbiere di Seviglia*', '*La Cenerentola*', '*La Gazza Ladra*', '*La Donna del Lago*', and '*Guillaume Tell*', are also from his pen, to which we are indebted for such a wealth of treasure in our operatic stores. He, however, possessed a certain indolence of mind; for, though he lived in or near Paris to a good old age, he persistently refused to compose after his thirty-seventh year, and so totally lost all his taste for music, that he would not even visit the theatres. His '*Stabat Mater*' is one of his greatest compositions.

Auber's music has been very popular. His style is lighter than Rossini's. He was a Frenchman, born at Caen in 1784, and apprenticed to his father's trade of a print-seller. He displayed his musical talent first in the composition of small pieces; but soon published operas, of which the best known are '*Fra Diavolo*', '*Masaniello*', and '*Le Domino Noir*'. '*Le Cheval Bronze*', '*L'Enfant Prodige*', '*Le Séjour Militaire*', '*Le Testament de la Billet Doux*', and '*La Bergère Chatelaine*', some of which were not successful, were also his. Auber's music is

lighter than that of the composers we have already noted and of the French school.

Meyerbeer's compositions, in style strike the mean between the heaviness of Weber's and the lightness of Auber's. The Germans are fond of crude, wild harmony. Crude chords occasionally intrude in Meyerbeer's compositions, but he more generally follows the Italian flow of harmony. '*Robert le Diable*' is one of his best known and most favourite compositions. The wild poetry and passion of the song of the half-mad Isabelle, '*Robert toi que j'aime*', is hardly to be equalled. '*Les Huguenots*' is equally popular.

To Bellini we are indebted for exquisite music. Born at Catania, in Sicily, in 1802, he early discovered such musical genius that the inhabitants of the town, to their lasting glory, sent him to Naples at the public expense, to be educated. His first opera was produced in his twenty-third year, at the Conservatoire at Naples. In 1831, '*La Sonnambula*' and '*Norma*' took the musical world by storm, and were received with deserved applause. From the enthusiastic rapture of Elvira's '*Ah! non giunge*', we turn to the tender duo of Norma and Adalgiza, '*Deh conte*', and the unsurpassed melody of '*Casta Diva*'. In 1833 he produced his '*Beatrice di Tenda*', less commonly known, but containing some beautiful music. To a clear, well-trained soprano or mezzo-soprano we recommend the air '*Ma la sola*'. It should be sung softly and delicately and tenderly, rising almost to passion in some passages. Like most operatic music, it is to a certain extent a dramatic song, and requires elocutionary power; but tenderness and plaintiveness are its chief characteristics. In 1834

Bellini produced his 'I Puritani,' which many hold to be his most brilliant effort. Soon after he was taken ill, and died near Paris, at the age of thirty-two.

In style, in sweetness, and in fancy there is great resemblance between the compositions of Bellini and Donizetti, his senior by four years in age, being born at Bergamo in 1798, and by seven years as a composer, his 'Enrico in Borgona' having been produced in 1818. He was educated at the Musical Institute of Bergamo, and at nineteen years of age entered the army, but still continued his musical pursuits. In 1822 he resigned the military profession. He was a most prolific writer, having produced thirty-one operas between 1818 and 1822, and thirty-three more subsequently. He was appointed master of counterpoint to the Royal College of Music at Naples, and chapel master and composer to the Imperial Court at Vienna. He was a man whose life was embittered by enemies who, envious of his genius, denied, most unjustly, the originality of his works, which were never truly appreciated until after his death. No composer has ever equalled him in the sweetness and perfection of his melodies. He was, unfortunately, his own worst enemy, having contracted habits of intemperance, which led to aberration of mind and a temporary confinement in a lunatic asylum. He recovered his reason before his death, which occurred in 1847. It is believed that his sensitive nature, wounded to the quick by the injustice of his critics, broke his heart and induced him to acquire the fatal habit that broke his reason. His finest operas are 'Lucrezia Borgia,' 'La Figlia del Reggimento,' 'Don Pasquale,' 'L'Elise d'Amour,' 'Lucia di Lammermoor,' and 'Anna Bolena.'

Sir Henry Bishop was the composer of the finest glees and trios ever written; they are marked by a musician-like power almost unapproachable. He was the finest and most popular songwriter of his day. Who is not familiar with the airy theme, 'Bid me discourse,' from the opera of 'Twelfth Night,' 'Tell me, my heart,' and 'Let us seek the yellow sands,' from the opera of 'Maid Marion?' Dr. Arne was another masterly classic composer. Nothing of his, perhaps, is more popular than that exquisite little song, 'Where the bee sucks,' from 'The Tempest.' The opera of 'Artaxerxes' is his finest work, and in it occurs the well-known gem, 'The soldier tired,' so brilliantly sung by Lady Lennox, who made her mark as Miss Paton. The name of Sir Henry Bishop brings back memories of Miss M. Tree and Miss Stephens, whose sweet voices delighted our mothers and grandmothers in the days gone by.

Rooke is a composer less well remembered. His opera of 'Amelie, or the Love Test,' seems to have sunk into oblivion since the time when Miss Shirreff and Mr. Phillips sang its exquisite melodies, 'What is the spell' (tenor), 'When the morning first dawns' (soprano), and 'When the red star hath risen.' As for Arditi, it will suffice to refer to his 'Il Bacio,' which established his fame.

The works of Verdi, the latest of opera writers, are too recent and too well known to need much comment. Far slighter than the compositions of Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, or Rossini, his works are yet pleasing and his melodies well imagined and firmly written. The music of 'Il Trovatore' and 'La Traviata' will live; and had he never written anything else

than the melodies 'Libiamo,' 'Il Balen,' 'Ah! che la morte,' and the exquisitely sweet and plaintive 'Si la Stanchezza,' it would entitle him at once to rank as a musician of marked talent. 'The muleteer's song,' 'I'm not the queen,' and 'The convent bell,' from the 'Rose of Castile,' deserve fully their popularity.

The late Vincent Wallace and Balfe, both Irishmen by birth, take high rank among the composers of modern music. The latter is the finest writer of instrumental and orchestral works the British dominions could ever boast. Vincent Wallace's pianoforte music is especially good. Balfe's 'Bohemian Girl' and 'Daughter of St. Mark,' and Wallace's 'Mariana,' are their best known operas. Balfe's airs, especially, 'I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls,' 'That you'll remember me,' and 'We may be happy yet,' originally sung by Miss Rainforth and Harrison, are 'familiar in our mouths as household words.' Balfe's serenade, 'Good-night, beloved,' published in several keys, is one of his most charming ideas.

The late John Barnett has been called the English Mozart. His 'Mountain Sylph' was a success, but his opera of 'Fair Rosamond,' was interdicted, on account of certain strictures on royalty with which it was tinctured, and which the composer refused to suppress. A very pretty, easy song for a contralto voice, written by John Barnett, and not much known, is called 'Like flowers that in the morning;' the accompaniment is very simple and the verses short.

Stephen Glover's songs are particularly suited for the drawing-room, and for the sweet rendering of girls' voices. His vocal duets are all charming. They are wor-

thy the best rendering of fine voices, and yet two small voices in tune and accord, that alone might sound poor, can give great pleasure to the hearer in rendering Glover's ideas. 'What are the wild waves saying?' is one of his best known duets. His 'Elfin call,' a duet, is certainly a much more poetical and varied setting of Mrs. Hemans's beautiful words than 'Water lilies,' by Ciro Pinsuti, a recent publication.

Among the composers whom we may especially call, not only the men of the day, but the men of the hour, Sir Julius Benedict is entitled to the foremost rank. He is not only the most gifted composer of the day, but his works are classical, and will take their place beside those of great masters in the time to come. He is the finest and most masterly conductor we ever had, and as such, justly the acknowledged chieftain of the present musical world. When the concert of Sir Julius Benedict has taken place the fashionable musical season is ended. To Benedict we are indebted for some sweet music which has already outlived the humour of the moment when it was written. Every concert-goer is familiar with his soft and effective ballad, 'By the sad sea waves,' a little gem so frequently extracted from his less hackneyed opera 'The Brides of Venice.'

Sir Michael Costa, another star of the Apollonian horizon, shines chiefly as an able conductor, although he has also snatched some laurels wherewith to weave a composer's crown.

Sir Sterndale Bennett is one of our greatest modern classical composers. His works have great depth, and are fine and masterly, like Haydn's or Mendelssohn's. His 'May Queen' is a *chef-d'œuvre* of ability. He has also the advan-

tage of being one of the finest players of classical music of the nineteenth century.

Blumenthal is a composer both of songs and instrumental music, who, in spite of a somewhat heavy and crude style, is very fashionable. His work is that of a good musician, and in calibre somewhat difficult.

Gounod has enjoyed a great deal of popularity as a writer of drawing-room music. He is very fond of making use of the passing note; which requires very great neatness in playing. His knack of filling up intervals in this way renders his music well marked, but difficult. He makes freer use of such musical phases than any other composer.

Herr Kuhe has produced a number of pleasing drawing-room pieces, and the best arrangements of 'God save the Queen' and 'Rule Britannia.' Tiltomalti is decidedly fashionable at the present day as a writer of light pieces, waltzes, and songs in the Italian school. To Smart we are indebted for a very opposite style of thing—classical compositions and songs, with difficult accompaniments, that require the skill of a musician to render them justly.

Herr Ganz is similar in style to Blumenthal, but his compositions are a little less difficult to execute; the accompaniments of his songs are decidedly easier. None of his compositions have been more popular than the vocal one, 'Sing, Birdie, sing.'

Cipriano Potter ranks next to Sir Sterndale Bennett as a classical composer. Sydney Smith, the composer of 'The March de Tambour' and 'Maypole Dance,' has made his mark as a fashionable writer of light music. Edwin West has contributed several gems of song to the store of English

composition. Of these, his 'Summer, shining summer' is the most perfect of all. 'Autumn, thou art welcome,' its companion, is full of originality and beauty, but requires more musicianly skill to render it well. 'Robin Hood' is a ballad full of exquisite feeling, and fresh touching melody. 'Our rifles are ready,' the words by Miss Clark, has deservedly been the most, we had almost said the only popular rifle song of the day; the words and music being alike spirited and above the calibre of class songs. The most fashionable of song writers at the present moment is Arthur Sullivan. His compositions are always safe investments, and may be relied on as being graceful and pretty. Frantz Abt, the author of 'When the swallows homeward fly,' and the recent melody, 'A rose in heaven,' is one of our most popular composers. His style is classical, and of the German school. Dan Godfrey is the king of the dance, and his arrangements of quadrilles and waltzes are always spirited and good.

It would be absurd to close an article on modern music without speaking of the boon conferred on amateur pianoforte players by the graceful, sparkling, and easy arrangements of Brinley Richards. He stands out alone as the originator of a pleasing, sparkling style of music, and one that admits of great feeling and display of taste, so simply set, so devoid of crudities and difficulties, that a child can play the easiest of his morceaux at the same time that an adult need not hesitate to introduce them into her portfolio. It would be a good thing for listeners if most profoundly-elaborate music was as full of melody and grace as what comes to us from this clever pen. To judge by its rarity, it must be almost a unique

gift to devise music at once easy, simple, and charming.

In treating of music which is not new, we have only mentioned such songs and pieces as will never be out of date; a heap of new music, just fresh from the hands of various publishers, lies before us, and from that we make a few selections that are worthy of a word of praise, and lay them before the reader. Of songs we choose four of diverse character, as specially deserving notice. 'Maggie'^{*} is a little gem of a ballad, and we marvel that it comes to us from a lady, so seldom do women excel in musical composition. So much greater, therefore, is the meed of praise due to Miss Jane Mayo for furnishing a ballad which is sure to be popular, and promises to live when the hundred and one songs of the day are forgotten. 'The Elf,'^{*} by Francisco Berger, is graceful and original, and far beyond the common mark; it requires a good singer and player. 'The Village Feast,'[†] a song-waltz, by Auguste Mey, is also spirited and not difficult. All these three songs may be taken by a mezzo-soprano voice, but are not low pitched. 'Three Lilies,'[†] by Virginia Gabriel, is a rather uncommon melody in a minor key, and arranged for a contralto. Besides these, we have a vocal duet, by Frantz Abt, 'Kathleen Aroon,'[†] the first part of which is very Irish, and 'The treasures of the heart.'[†] 'Apart,'[§] by Comyn Vaughan, is a plaintive, easy song, with a fresh melody and soothing accompaniment that 'he who runs may read.'

Of new instrumental music, Eaton Lanning's 'Brooklet'^{*} deserves to rank first. It is a sterling composition, well written,

full of charming harmony and effect, but somewhat abstruse, and requiring a professional or first-class amateur to do justice to its intricacies. 'Golden Slumbers,'^{*} by Walter Macfarren, is rather troublesome to execute at first, on account of the syncopated movement of the bass, which is very effective, and well repays a little careful practice. It is a sweet, tender, and original melody, containing very delicate modulations, and is a thorough musician-like composition, well carried out to the end. 'La Fête Villageuse,'[§] by Claudius H. Couldry, is a sparkling novelty, of a light, vivacious character, moderately difficult, and deserving a little careful treatment. A very easy piece, 'Bourrée,'[†] by J. T. Thekell, may be recommended as admitting of expression and tenderness.

We have not exhausted our subject. We could say much more about 'modern music, and some modern composers.' We have not touched on the subject of the unfortunate man who gave birth to that gem of melodies, 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' or the gifted pianist and arranger, Thalberg, who took the world by storm about the year 1828, and who has exercised such a large amount of influence on the foundation of the modern method of playing the pianoforte. There are a host more whose shades rise up and point at us reproachfully for our neglect. But what can we do? Space in 'London Society' has its limits, and in the magazine as in the drawing-room, though we fain would, we cannot ask all we know at once to our conversazione.

One word before parting. Having dwelt so much at an earlier

* Published by Lamborn Cock, New Bond Street.

† Published by Cramer and Co., Regent Street.

‡ Published by Robert Cocks and Co., New Burlington Street.

§ Published by Boosey and Co.

stage on the power of taste and sentiment in rendering easy music more pleasing than much that emanates from the highly skilled mechanical manipulist, we would not have it supposed that the necessity for all instruction and hard practice is ignored. It is essential to possess a certain amount of mechanical skill before it is possible to make the fingers speak all the tender gradations of feeling which the soul dictates—nicety, neatness, care, and a clean, flexible, sensitive touch are wanted for this. So in simple ballad singing, not merely the gift of a clear, pure, sympathetic, and moderately full voice is wanted; there must be sufficient training to give its owner necessary skill to modulate its tone with refinement and effect and to enunciate the words in a proper manner. To the ignorant and the lazy the power of pleasing in any way slumbers. Nothing can be achieved without effort. But the effort must, of course, be in the right direction, and then a comparatively small stock of effort may be crowned with a happy result.

In playing music with variations, many amateur performers, such as our friend Miss Fortissimo, go through the air steadily and correctly, without much expression, and then, with one foot on the loud pedal, rush off into the variations at tip-top speed from end to end of the piano, as if to get over the whole thing with as much noise and rapidity as possible were the chief object. Now, every variation has leading notes in it, which carry the melody; These should be brought out forcibly as they occur, and the rest of the ornate passage subdued: it is generally best to keep it quite soft, in the musical-box style; but where a passage is marked loud, the notes conveying the

melody must be yet louder, and *ben macato*; they are not to be hammered or forced, but pressed out; not *staccato* at all in sound, but rather prolonged, as in a song, *cantabile*. All the expression and tenderness uttered in the plain melody should also be retained in these notes, and the variations should rise and fall in accordance, dying away gradually where the effect of a *rallentando* is needed. Take the beautiful arrangement of 'Home, sweet home,' as an instance. How many attempt, and how few can play it! It is rattled off by Miss Fortissimo in her usual noisy style. Instead of this, the introduction should commence soft as a whisper, and the air gradually dawn on the listener. It should never be loud. The variation with the shake is to be a mere whisper, very *pianissimo*, the melody in octaves alone standing out loud and firm. The last variation is to be as soft as the warbling of a musical-box, the chords that form the air very heavy or *pezzante*, but also soft, rendering the air with the greatest feeling and tenderness of expression. This piece, suited for public performance when properly rendered, is constantly thrust into the hands of incompetent school-girls, and rattled over in an excruciating way. Here we have one of the secrets of a vicious style of playing—the modern forcing system—attempting music beyond the powers of the performer. The result is a miserable, slovenly rattle. No one should attempt to play music he or she cannot completely master after moderate practice and with ease. It should be executed neatly, deftly, easily, and every point studied to make it 'speak.' That is the real way to learn music, and to become an artistic player. Noise is not music.

GEORGIANA C. CLARK.

HONEYMOON.

PHILOSOPHERS are at issue on the question of honeymoon. Should it be raptured by the sea, or in London, or Paris? Should it look to auxiliaries for the potency of its spell, or should it wholly rely upon love? Should the poem of seaweed, and shingle, and sea-gull, mingle with the tender delight; or should Fleet Street and Long Acre, Cornhill and the Poultry, veil the interior joy? This is a profound enquiry. We are disposed to give to it whatever of mind is demanded by the greatest of subjects. Honeymoon is the parenthesis of life.—Where should we pass our honeymoon?

Now there are those who urge that London is the place—the only place—in which to pass a honeymoon. Morley's Hotel is the real ideal of efficacious adoration. Theatres at night, and academies by day; drives in the Park, and concerts. O shocking profanity! What, *no* green lanes; no murmuring, rippling, soothing sea; no otiose nothingness of delicious peace, hemmed by future delight? Language is at fault to describe the frockcoatedness of that metropolitan mind, which could conceive such anomalous honeymoon. Where is your poetry? Where is your boyish, earliest dream of what *should* constitute honeymoon? Are those first anticipations, which we formed at fifteen, as we lay on the grass in the summer—of moonlit walks, and very blue sea, and fanning leaves, and honeysuckle, to be sunk in the barren fact of the Strand, or in a stroll up the Lowther Arcade? Am I to heave my sigh to Nelson's column, or coo to the Royal Exchange? Must I make my vow in the Oxford Circus, or look like a dove to an om-

nibus? Such thoughts are heretical. There is a religion in sentiment, which to outrage is heresy: and honeymoon is sentiment (parenthesised).

But you persist that London is the proper place in which to pass your honeymoon. Then pass it there, if you like. Regardless of the fact that, as you sit in your stall (or, say the dress-circle) at the 'Princess's,' everyone will detect your connubiality, and even date the hour of your wedding: heedless of the certainty that, if you hail a Hansom, the driver will smile apprehensively: reckless of the truth that the very shyness of your walk, and a certain honey-moonedness of toilet, will proclaim the recentness of the event—oh! pass your honeymoon in London! Why the very waiters at Morley's will know by the diffidence with which you pronounce Mrs. Darlington that it *could not* have happened three days ago. The indifference you show to the coachman's fare will mark the absorption of your mind. The effort of your bride *not* to wear orange blossom will prove how lately she has done so; and your own affectations of accustomed husbandom will declare you a new-married man. If you go into a shop, the girls behind the counter will smile at your would-be-at-easiness; and your obvious determination *not* to say 'dearest' will be more apparent than even the desire. Should you walk down Pall Mall, the public will turn, and think—'ah! the day before yesterday!' The way that you hold your bride's little arm will show that you have not done it long: (for there is a vast distinction between lovers' arm-in-arm, and people's who have been mar-

ried ten years). You cannot escape your advertisement! 'Just married, and here for the honeymoon,'—is as patent and legible from your hat to your boots, as if it were carried by a 'Sandwich.'

'But then the lostness of London,' you say, in reply: 'what a gain that is to two lovers!' Well: if the crowd were as utterly lost to you, as, no doubt, you are to the crowd, there might be something to be said for the view. But the detective eye of the metropolitan scoffer is not to be put off by boldness. *He* will remark you wherever you go; and say—'Ah! only just begun! Wait six months, or twelve; and then we shall see you publicly linked with much less of pronounced assiduity. That homage you throw into your elbow will be quite out of place in a father; and the proposal to carry that new parasol will be utterly unthought of next year. Very beautiful, no doubt, (oh she really is lovely: what feet, and what 'six-and-a-quarters'); but the maturity of marriage will give you both looks, not less real but certainly less new.'

'Then we won't go to London,' says a particular couple, 'though we think your remarks are absurd. After all, there are two views of wedding; and you can take only one. You forget there are people who like to be seen, and who are proud of being bravely married. They find great delight in proclaiming to the world that they have set it a good example. And, in truth, Mr. Satirist, (we expect you are a bachelor, grown old and wizen with selfishness,) it would be very much better if *some* people we could name—instead of leaning languidly out of west-end club windows, and having broughams for equivocal friends—would walk arm-in-arm with their own darling

wives down Pall Mall, Piccadilly, or Regent Street; and we strongly suspect that writers who make merry with the foibles of "advertising" couples, have lost the simplicity, and something of the virtue, which rejoices in really getting married. But to let this pass: though we could be very severe, if we said all we think on the subject. However, since you won't let us spend our honeymoon in London, pray where would you advise us to spend it?'

To this ill-tempered retort we calmly reply: 'Spend it in the Isle of Wight.'—And now to consider the Honeymoon Proper; as passed by the babbling sea.

We affirm that the island—the island *par excellence*—is the place in which to pass a honeymoon; and we will advocate its claims from that temperate point of view which is peculiar to indifferent minds. We admit that there are railroads now in the island, which mar its honeymoon-beauty. Time was!—(ah! how well we remember it, say some thirty or forty years ago; when boyhood made life seem all flowers, and love was the loveliest of them all!)—time was when no hissing locomotive spoiled the poetry of the island. *Then* couples might be seen in every green lane, forgetting the metropolis of care. You detected a-head—under that pretty little hedge—two who had just become one. You knew that tale—that very old tale, which we all of us love to tell once. But now the island is like Hampstead or Hackney; riven by hideous rails; and you must go very near indeed to the sea, or take a boat and pull out behind the Needles, if you want to escape *that* wrong. Still, there is nothing much prettier in the whole of Great Britain than Shanklin, and Bonchurch, and Sandown: there is

nothing more peaceful and perfectly alone, than a stroll in these places by night. We will say then that the south of the Isle of Wight shall be our oasis of life; and we will start from the wedding-breakfast at Hackney (oh! it matters not whence we start) and order the coachman to drive to 'Waterloo,' and engage our coupé for the south.

Kingston, Farnborough, Winchester, Southampton. Then a fly to the pier—Southampton Water—Cowes—a barouche and pair—Freshwater.

O balmy breezes! O delicious melody of song of heart! O music born of wedding-day!—O—but stop! This is not precisely the point at issue. We proposed to enquire the true philosophy of *where* to pass a honeymoon; and we are not to be diverted by ecstasy.

We will say, then, that you spent one entire month (we prefer to put the case as your own, since we never experienced it ourselves) in the south of the Isle of Wight; and we ask you—touching the retrospect—is it quite satisfactory?

Well: if the truth must be told, there was, perhaps, something wanting in the sameness of Undercliff life. You found that a month of sitting on a beach, varied by strolls in sweet-briar'd lanes, and intervalled by talks that were broken with love, was just a trifle *ennuyant*. You remember that walk down Black Gang Chine; and it occurs to you it was rather fatiguing. You distinctly recall two hours at Ventnor, and it seems to you it was somewhat a bore. You admire the sea; but it does not promote conversation. You are fond of idling; but the repetition presents no great novelty. It may be, that you have a special gift for throwing pebbles into the depths of the

ocean; but you discovered, after the third or fourth day, that it is a pastime fraught with insignificance. You would have liked to vary the monotony of peace with just a dash of disquiet. The sea was delicious; the calm most enjoyable; the mutuality perfect; the contentment ideal. But somehow—if the truth must be stated—you wanted something to do.

'Then you admit, after all,' replies our censor, 'that there is much to be said for London.'

We admit nothing at all. No prudent controversialist will ever admit what interferes with his favourite idea. We have an idea, and we will state it in the end: but, for the present, we pursue our enquiry.

There is a third view of honeymoon, dissimilar to both which we have thus far attempted to sketch. It is the making a 'tour' on the Continent of Europe; culminating, it may be, in Rome. 'Henry will take me to Rome, I know; for, if we don't go there in our honeymoon, we shall never go there at all.'

So Henry takes her to Rome.

Ah! that journey to Paris was pleasant enough, till the trousseau was lost at the station (mamma's lovely present, and that 'Ibis' feather, which cousin Frederick spent three days in hunting; and the bracelets and earrings, and the etcetera of compliment, were all stolen by that—Heaven knows whom). And from Paris to Marseilles would have been very agreeable; but for the fact that there were half-a-dozen babies in the carriage you happened to occupy; and their pastimes—so interesting to their parents—were horribly offensive to you. Arrived at Marseilles, the city was beautiful, but the Consul could not be found: and you had left your passport somewhere in

your baggage; that baggage which was stolen in Paris. (How you could have been so careless, is one of those mysteries that can only be explained by honeymoon). Then the sail from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia would have been a poem, a capture, in itself; but for the drawback that you were dreadfully ill, and had to be carried on deck at the Port. The breakfast at Civita was consoling indeed; but why did you leave your reticule on board the steam-boat, and oblige Henry to go back to fetch it? (The steam-boat had started just as he neared it; and the reticule went on to Naples). In Rome, what monuments, what sculpture! but a bed-room on the nineteenth floor of your hotel (arrived at by a hundred stone steps) seemed to you cheerless as pity. You cut short your stay (for the heat was intolerable), and returned by the beautiful Alps. Very beautiful indeed was that journey up the Alps, in a diligence, built to hold four, but holding for this occasion, eight. At Mayence, you made a mistake; for the boat which was to take you as far as Cologne, steamed out as your train came in; and you had two days to wait in the city which offered you—a church, and also an hotel. On the whole, you have pleaded that Memory is a mirror in which travelling reflects only pleasures: the actual facts of abnormal disgust being hushed in the depths of the past.

A fourth view of honeymoon is utterly distinct from any we have hitherto touched. It is to pass the time in visiting your friends—friends of both bride and bridegroom.

Well: if you like to be criticised as if you were a patent; or taken to pieces like parts of Greek verbs; the idea may be worth entertaining. It is certain that scrutiny

will exhaust its efforts on everything that pertains to your Ego. Your temper, your smile, your figure, your face, and also your allotments in Consols, will be disintegrated with that marvellous interest which attaches to new-married couples. Less your own than your friends', you will be keenly appropriated, like property that is brought to them on view. If you happen to meet with a former adored-one,—the *prisca venus* of less prudent days—it is likely that the greeting will be affable enough, but the reflections will be somewhat one-sided. It is hardly fair to expose the young bride to meet Captain Alphonse de Doteington; nor the bridegroom to renew his glances with Flora de—ten years ago. Inconveniences ensue on the too-trusting friendliness of marriage so safe in its wedding-ring; and, apart from all accidents, there is really incongruity in 'wedding entreating inspection.' Some people may like it—of the muscular school (men with loud voices and women with shrill; especially women who wear gold spectacles; love astronomy, and double-soled boots), but for people of poem, and for shy dispositions, we do not recommend these visits.

Kindred in style, though not in degree, is a fifth kind of honeymoon (abnormal). It is to pass the time with your Pa and Ma; at home as if you were *not* married. In Italy, this method is popular, especially with the very great people. We have known a couple—married in Rome, with gorgeous state and effrontery—repair immediately with the bride's Pa and Ma, to the family-seat at Frascati. There things renewed their accustomed homeness, precisely as in unmarried days. The sole introduction of novel characteristic was the bridegroom *not*

being ‘invited.’ He took his place, as a matter of course, at the family breakfast and dinner; and the bride seemed to feel she had a right to be present, in excess of mere filial habit. But it must be owned that neither the bride nor the bridegroom looked altogether at their ease. Papas and mammas, and brothers and sisters, have known you so very long! They have a way of not looking, not speaking, not observing, which is the very perfection of family-scrutiny. Little Boy (*aetate* nine) will make his remarks, scarcely pointed with delicate finesse; and, if he say nothing, his silence is eloquent—of what very odd things he must think. ‘Home’ is delightful under normal conditions; and who so devoted as parents? But we doubt whether lovers, just come out of twedness, would not prefer—say the Isle of Wight?

We might hazard other methods of passing a honeymoon derived from European sources; or we might journey to the remotest parts of the world, and fetch some singular precedents. In Abyssinia, for example, the bridegroom, after wedding, carries off his bride on his shoulders. So we may imagine that his perceptions of honeymoon have nothing in common with our own. In Arabia, a man will have had forty wives before he is forty years of age: so we conclude that a honeymoon in Arabia is too recurring to have any charm. In Dahomey, it would appear that the king of the country claims all the women for his wives; and, when he dies, his successor inherits them; so that he must come into a very fine property. In Egypt, a man does not see his bride until he is actually married: so that honeymoon must have a charm of discovery, as well as one of fruition. In Hindostan, the women are such

slaves, so degraded, untaught, and shut up; that taking a wife is like taking a sheep, and there is nothing to be argued about it. But why discuss these phenomena, which really have no interest for us: since no one who is married by an honourable and reverend, at St. George’s, Hanover Square (nor even by the calm village curate, ‘assisted by’ the still calmer rector) would think for a moment of going to Abyssinia, Egypt, Hindostan, or Dahomey. No: we will now enunciate our favourite idea, as we promised our censor to do: and if we are met with indignant hostility, we can only be sorry—for our censor.

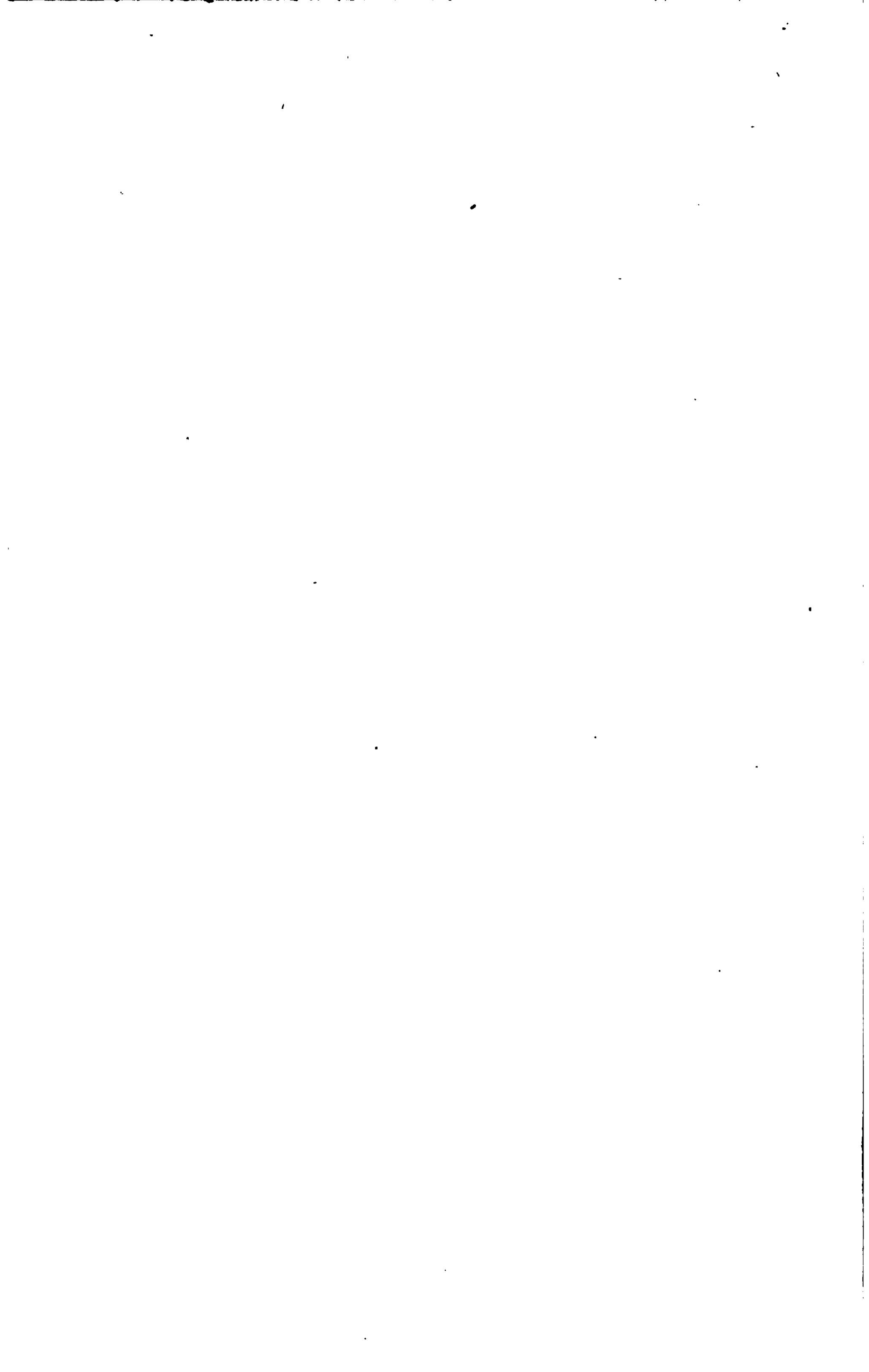
We propose then, if ever we get married (and recent statistics have tended to show that human life is rapidly lengthening; so that, say ninety-six will shortly be the period when maturity will suggest change of state) to go ‘*straight home*,’ without the slightest deviation, to Paris, or to the Isle of Wight. We know of no ‘scenery’ so worthy to be birthplace to our first and fondest associations, as that home we have elected for the haven of our settled and life-long joy. We will assume that we are men of ‘profession,’ and that we have chambers or offices ‘in town,’ where we are tied for eight hours a day. Now, granted that it is a bore to have to run off after breakfast from our *domus et placens uxor*; consider, we pray you, the joy of *returning*, so soon as the day’s work is over! Tell us if there is anything comparable in Paris, or even in the Isle of Wight, to jumping into a Hansom, and driving back furiously, to the wife who awaits you at home. ‘Ah! there she is.’ She has been at the window for at least an hour and a half: and the welcome you get from the long-silenced tongue is worth days of unbroken

delight. Constituted, as we are—with ‘action and reaction,’ permeating almost every breath—the grand thing to do is to keep up enjoyment, by avoiding excess at the beginning. The faculty of happiness is like a purse of money, which requires economising wisely: and the spendthrift, who looks on his capital as interest, soon comes to the end of his tether. There is no denying it—men are but capable of a restricted amount of affection (of women I presume not to speak): and if they turn on the fountains of too exuberant delight, and pour out their streams on one moon, there is a risk of mere dew-drops remaining for the season, which ensues upon banqueting-love. We say, then, that the wisest lover is he who, mindful of the ‘limited means’ of his love, profoundly finances his banking account, and keeps a large margin in hand. A boy of eighteen is firmly convinced that he can love like a furnace for ever: and the contempt he entertains for dowers and settlements is only equalled by the poem of his soul. But, arrived at thirty, he begins to suspect that true love (like true income, true virtue) is a matter which involves immense science: and that only to the scholar, to the patient inquirer, will the science unfold all its secrets. Therefore it is that we fearlessly advocate the science of beginning love well: and we respect that man who respects his wife, by respecting his own capacities.

To return. Our cottage at Hackney—(oh you can settle at Sydenham, New Forest, or Bexley, if you are shocked at such Shore-

ditch localities. We have no predilection for Ratcliff Highway; neat Brompton, cold Croydon, proud Kew. We merely instance the bathos involved in such names as Hackney or Pentonville; since the more dreadful the place, the greater the need of avoiding contrast by Shanklin)—our cottage at Hackney shall be the sanctum, in which the science of love shall be perfected. *One* delight at a time, one newness of pledge, one sweetness of even Hackney-ideal. Business as before (and as it must always be afterwards) with the new exaltation of love. But you will not have it, O indignant censor: and we know that you are going to be severe. Very well. Then order round the carriage, and ‘off to the Isle of Wight.’ Oh, we will not reproach you! We are half disposed to go with you,—if we obeyed the instinct of feeling. We have talked as philosophers, as savants in love: but if you will take that lovely little woodbine cottage, with clematis just contending for the view; and the murmuring sea almost lapping at your feet; and the nooks and shelters for love: we really are not going to be angry. There is a philosophy after all, which is better than any—‘getting all that you can, while you may;’ and you will lay up a treasury of fond recollections, on which you may draw in the future. Only do not come back to Hackney! Manage to sigh yourselves away with love; like Echo—but not for a Narcissus—and live in the air, on the rocks, by the sea; free in your spirits for ever. But—oh do not come back to Hackney!

ARTHUR FEATHERSTONE.



Drawn by Harrison Weir }

"RONALD."





RONALD.

(LORD CARDIGAN'S CHARGER AT BALAKLAVA.)

NEAR twenty years have passed away
 Since charging through the bloody fray—
 And Ronald's dead !

He laid him down at set of sun,
 And died, his race of glory run,
 In paddock shed !

If Ronald's lord, so stern and proud,
 Looked on when his brave charger bowed
 To Fate's decree,
 What fond farewell his tears would speak—
 The few that e'er rolled down his cheek—
 In sympathy !

But Ronald's lord was dead and gone,
 And slept beneath the Priory stone,
 In sculptured pride ;
 Yet still will English hearts so stout
 For steed and rider beat throughout
 The nation wide.

Ronald, if steeds could speak, would tell
 The brave who fought, the brave who fell—
 The charge, the rally,
 Right, left, and front, and back again,
 Through sulphur-clouds and iron rain,
 In the death valley !

He'd tell how sternly sate his lord,
 His head erect, his knightly sword
 Gleaming and ready ;—
 And how they rode along so gay,
 As on parade or hunting day,
 Grandly and steady !

Garter or Bath, if steed might deck,
 Ronald was worthy round his neck
 To claim and wear it :
 A soul he'd here, at least, below ;
 Beyond the grave 'tis, we all know,
 Profane to swear it !

JOHN SHEEHAN.

THE SECRET SOCIETY.

BY HERBERT M. PRIOR.

I WAS once a commercial traveller for a large London firm, trading between London and Russia — consequently I passed a considerable time in the latter country, chiefly in St. Petersburg. I have still many friends there, and speak the language as well as my own.

I became attached by degrees to the place, though, I must confess, at first I disliked it. Perhaps it was because it wasn't home, or perhaps because I had no real friend there. To tell the truth, I shrank from making one, as I knew before I had been many weeks in the country that every other man was a spy, and you might sit down and crack a bottle of wine with one whom you thought the jolliest fellow you had ever met, and next day be marched to prison, with your bosom friend of yesterday brought up as evidence against you, when, should the charge be proved and pronounced treason (arising from something you may have thoughtlessly said about Russia), you might be sent to learn silence and wisdom for three months in a dark cell.

I had been warned of this, and never encouraged intimacy with any one. I was beginning to get sick of it all, and seriously thought of going home to England to seek other employers, when an event happened which changed all the current of my life.

It was the beginning of May, and getting very warm in St. Petersburg; so, after my day's work was over, I went down to the bathing-place, where in the hot weather I was accustomed to spend many hours. To-day I was not the only one there, as often

happened; there was a young light-haired Russian enjoying himself in the limpid stream. It wasn't very long before I was following his example, and in about twenty minutes I was out again drying myself and watching the gambols of this young fellow.

'He must be tolerably fond of bathing,' I said to myself, 'to stay in that ice bath so long;' for he was in it when I arrived, and how long he had been there before, of course I could not say.

I turned away to dress, and had put on my trousers and shirt, when I looked round to see if he was out yet or performing any strange antic; but he was no longer to be seen. I looked for his clothes, which were still there, but no signs of the bather. Good heavens! what was that? A hand surely! yes! and now another, and a head! and a murmured scream for help! To jump in just as I stood, half dressed, and haul him on land was the work of an instant. He was perfectly unconscious, and till I felt his heart gently beating, I thought him dead; after, with much labour, rubbing, chafing, and administering brandy, which I providentially had with me, I got him into a hackney carriage, and, learning his address from a card in his pocket, had him driven to his home.

I never shall forget the scene when, the cabman and myself helping the poor half-drowned fellow from the cab, the hall door opened, and his widowed mother and only sister came shrieking down the garden to the gate, fancying we were bringing his corpse.

In a few hours he was conscious and on the way to recovery. In

the meantime the good people had insisted on my going to bed, and had ordered their man-servant to rub me well with brandy and swathe me in hot blankets. I pooh-pooh'd it at first, but this was before the excitement of the affair had worn off; and as soon as I got thoroughly warmed through by the stiff jorum of boiling brandy and water, which made me feel most deliciously drowsy, I thought I should do the wise and proper thing in accepting their kind offers.

Some time in the evening I awoke and found a complete set of clothing laid out for me; so, feeling as right as a trivet, I jumped up and dressed. Being dressed, I went out to inquire how the patient was getting on; and, as I opened my door, the one *vis-à-vis* opened also, and the mother came forward with both hands outstretched.

'Now you are yourself again, let me give you a mother's blessing for having saved her only son;' and with these words she raised her hands, and, placing them on my bowed head, exclaimed, 'May God bless you and reward you for the great good you have done, and may all my household lay down their lives at any time to render you a service.'

She then kissed me once on the forehead and twice on the chin, in Russian style, and added, 'And now come to see Peter; he is doing charmingly, and cannot rest until he thanks his preserver.'

We entered the room, and there, lying in bed, was the light-haired youth, looking more like what I first saw in the water than the corpse-like body I had dragged out with its flaxen hair clinging tightly to the face. Beside him sat the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. I couldn't stop the blessings and thanks they all

showered on my head—so let them have their say and make a fool of me to the top of their bent.

The end of it was that I was persuaded to give up my lodgings and live with them; the very natural consequence being that I fell in love with Catrina, the lovely daughter, and (what was not so natural a consequence) she with me. I never spent such happy days as I did in that quiet, peaceful new home of mine. The widow loved me as a son; Peter was a brother who could never find anything sufficient to show his friendship for me; and Catrina—ah! that was the sweetest of all! Catrina not only loved, but ere long accepted me as her affianced husband.

Alas! it was destined by Providence that my happiness was not to last, and as I pondered over it afterwards, I thought it stood to reason that such bliss was too perfect and too sweet to be permanent.

The blow fell upon me about three weeks after the accident happened—in fact, I received two blows together.

One was a letter from my sister to say my mother was dangerously ill, and that if I wanted to see her alive, I must return at once to England. The other was from my employers, saying that, as the firm had experienced severe losses in the Colonies, my services would no longer be required. Phew! what was to be done? I showed Catrina both letters, and asked her advice.

'Go home directly,' she said.

'Will you come with me, Catrina?'

'No,' she replied; 'I cannot leave my mother.'

I had two most miserable days talking and arranging about my departure. Peter had obtained a berth for me, and it was agreed that on my return I should marry

Catrina and settle down in Russia for life.

The next day I was *en route* for England.

I found my mother very ill with rheumatic fever—but not in danger. Of course it was not very long before both she and my sister knew of my attachment to Catrina, and, although they didn't like the idea of my marrying a foreigner, yet when I interpreted her sweet letters to them, they had to admit that she seemed most ardently attached to me.

My mother got rapidly better, and in August was recommended to go to Homburg, and take the mineral baths and drink the waters, and she insisted on my accompanying her. We arrived after a hot and dusty two days' journey. I secured excellent rooms in a charming little villa on the *Unter Promenade*, which, to my mind, is by far the healthiest locality at Homburg. The place was very crowded. All sorts of swells and big-wigs, from royal highnesses to sucking barristers, were there. The play, too, was enormous.

I enjoyed myself very much at Homburg. I met a great number of Russians whom I had known in their own country, and it was a great treat to me to speak the language again; it reminded me so much of Catrina and my Russian home. There was one gentleman I took a great fancy to, a man called Scholvolski, a commercial traveller like myself. He seemed to have taken an equal fancy to me, and was always asking me to dine with him at the restaurant. Sometimes a friend of his dined with us, a man I disliked, why, I knew not—unless it was that his expression was diabolical, sensual, cruel, and pitiless. I told my friend Scholvolski one day that I wouldn't join him again if he

asked his friend. To which he replied, laughingly, 'Oh, he's not a bad fellow, only his face is so much against him.'

If I had been in Russia I should not have acted as incautiously as I did. In the first place, I should not have encouraged the intimacy of Scholvolski, and in the second, I should not have opened my lips and spoken so freely of Russia before his friend—I should have set him down at once for a deadly spy. But here in Europe I could afford to laugh at all such ideas, and put the thought of spies, midnight arrests, the knout, and all such barbarities out of my head, and give my opinion as loud and as long as I chose about Russia and her customs. This I did very frequently—more especially as I was constantly led on to do so by my friend Scholvolski.

I had been about a month at Homburg, my mother was wonderfully improved, and very anxious to get back home, when a most curious circumstance happened to me. I had not received a letter from Catrina for more than three weeks, and was getting uneasy. I was quite willing to return home, being impatient to ascertain if any letters had arrived from Russia, and had been forwarded and lost. I wrote a long, loving letter to Catrina, telling her I had missed her usual weekly dispatch, informing her also of my mother's convalescence and of my impatient desire to get back to Russia and make her my wife with as little delay as possible.

We settled to leave Homburg the following day, and I went to post my letter and bid adieu to my friends. Coming out of the post-office, on the bottom step I saw something glittering in the sun. I picked it up—it was the prettiest little ornament I ever

saw. A scarf pin, evidently made to fasten like a brooch, about the size of a shilling; and round it some cabalistic figures inclosed within a garter; two letters interwoven in the centre on red and blue enamel—the letters being in brilliants; a blue enamel 7 at the top, and the letter K hanging from the bottom in plain gold.

I thought the best way to find its owner was to wear it myself; so I stuck it in the left lappel of my coat, and on my black coat it glistered famously. I looked next morning among the list of things lost, in the glass case in the vestibule of the Kursaal; but no notice was up yet. ‘Well,’ I thought, ‘I’ll give it till to-morrow, and then I’ll hand it to the Commissaire of Police.

In looking for Scholvolski I met his obnoxious friend, who glared in a frightful way at the jewel in my coat, which made me say, in fun, ‘How do you like the order I have received?’

‘Did you receive that?’ he asked, apparently unable to keep his eyes off it.

‘Why shouldn’t I?’ I answered, laughing.

He turned on his heel, and left me suddenly.

At last, seated at the roulette-table, I found Scholvolski. I touched him on the shoulder, and asked, ‘What luck?’

‘Ah, my dear friend!’ he answered, ‘the same—always bad. How are you? But what! what!’ and he too stared with all his might at my order, and seemed to turn pale.

‘Well,’ I thought, ‘this must be something remarkably interesting. Do they take me for a king in disguise; or do they think I’ve stolen the decoration? At any rate, I won’t tell them until I find out what they mean.’

‘Come away quickly,’ said Schol-

volski, taking my arm and leading me on to the terrace, where we sat down at a table and had some coffee. All this time he never took his eyes off my decoration.

At last I said, ‘Well, my friend, how do you like my new order, eh? I flatter myself this is rather better than your dirty little bit of green and orange ribbon.’

‘Have you had it long?’ he asked, seriously.

‘No,’ I replied, ‘not very long. Why?’

‘Oh, nothing; only I thought—’

And hearing a whistle in the grounds below, he jumped up, and, without saying a word, rushed down the steps. In a minute or two I saw him emerge from some trees with his horrid friend. They were both talking most vehemently, and gesticulating like two mad Frenchmen.

‘Holloa!’ I thought; ‘that whistle sounded like a signal. I’ll try and imitate it, and see if it brings him back;’ and as well as I could, I gave it—two high notes, then two low, and one very shrill. I seemed to have hit it rather smartly, for both jumped as if shot, and looked up to the place whence the whistle proceeded. My friend Scholvolski rushed to me and said,

‘Did you whistle then?’

‘Yes,’ I replied. ‘Is it such a wonderful thing to be able to imitate a whistle? My dear friend, it’s an Englishman’s solace and delight. We whistle all day long.’

‘Ah!’ he muttered, ‘an Englishman? True; but half Russian.’

Saying which, he rejoined his companion, and they appeared more frantic than ever. From their looks in my direction, I was evidently the theme of their conversation. ‘Well,’ I thought, ‘I’m not sorry to be going to-morrow. I’m

getting tired of Homburg and of Scholvolski; he's too much with that brute.'

He came up to me soon, and I began to bid him my adieux.

'Oh, come and dine with me—quite alone, I assure you; this is our last night.'

In vain I pleaded packing.

'Bah!' said he; 'you have a good hour before dinner.'

It was of no use; he would take no excuse; and when I said, 'All right,' a curious look came over his face. I didn't understand it then—I did some hours after.

We had a most sumptuous dinner—by far the best he had ever given me. He drank very deeply, and I am ashamed to say I did the same—a thing I am not given to at all; but whether it was the hot night, the hot room, or the excellence of the wine (it was the best Johannisberg, two napoleons the bottle), I know not; all I remember is, we rose late, having had great arguments about Russian politics, secret societies, and other things connected with his country; and I felt anything but firm on my legs.

'I'll see you home, old fellow,' he said, taking my arm and leading me out. '*Allons* for home, sweet home! You've got your order all right, haven't you?' he shouted in my ear; and glaring down on it, his face, to my distempered vision, appeared to have turned yellow.

'Oh, yes, I've got it safe enough,' I laughingly answered. 'I'm not going to lose such a treasure as that.'

'No, mind you don't,' he shouted again, and looked yellower than ever.

By this time we had passed through the vestibule, and he hailed a carriage off the stand.

'Get in,' he said, quite roughly.

'No, thanks,' I replied. 'I prefer

the fresh air, and will walk home; so good night, and good bye.'

'Oh, do just drive with me as far as my lodgings; and we'll walk back to your house together,' he pleaded, in his old, kind, gentle way; and, as it was our last night together, I thought I'd humour him, so I got into the cab. He gave some directions in a low tone to the cabman, and off we drove in the opposite direction to my home. Two or three times I asked my companion where on earth we were going to; but he sat silent, puffing a cigar, and looking very serious; and seeing we were in the country, I could not stand it any longer, so I leant out of the cab and asked the coachman where he was driving. I did not catch his answer, for at this moment we pulled up at a solitary, and apparently uninhabited house.

'Here we are. Jump out,' said Scholvolski.

The cab drove off rapidly towards Homburg.

'What house is this?' I inquired.

'My lodging,' he replied, at the same time giving the peculiar whistle I had heard that afternoon in the gardens.

As he finished speaking, a small panel in the upper portion of the door opened; whereupon Scholvolski said two or three words which I did not catch, and the noise of unlocking and unbarring the door immediately followed.

'Enter,' said my friend.

I had half a mind to turn sharp round, and make a bolt for Homburg. How I wished I had done so before many minutes had elapsed! Scholvolski, following close behind me, gave me a push away from the door, near to which I was lingering, and at the same instant it shut with a tremendous bang. The janitor, who I now saw by his lamp was a gigantic, ugly Russian,

barred it carefully, and then, turning round, thrust his lamp full in my face, and, pointing to my order, said, with a hoarse laugh,

'Welcome!'

'Come on,' shouted Scholvolski from the end of the dark passage. 'Bring the light, and show us in.'

'All right,' answered James; and he followed till we came to where Scholvolski was waiting. Then, throwing open a door, he said something in a low voice; at the same time my friend gave me another awful push that sent me flying into the room; so that, to save myself from falling, I clutched the back of a chair, and so steadied myself, and recovered my senses. I was in a large, long room brilliantly lighted, with a table running nearly the whole length, round which were seated about thirty men, all smoking cigarettes. A man who was sitting at the head of the table got up, and said, 'Gentlemen, welcome.'

To my horror, this man, who seemed the president of the party, was Scholvolski's friend, whom I so much disliked.

Just then Scholvolski touched me on the arm, and asked, 'How do you like their orders?'

I glanced in the direction he indicated, and saw that every man had on his breast a facsimile of the jewel I wore.

'Ah! ha!' I thought; 'now I shall find out all about it.'

During this time I had been standing in the centre of the room, with Scholvolski near me.

He now said, 'Won't you take a seat, and join in the conversation?'

'No, thank you,' I replied, feigning coolness. 'As it is so late, I must be off; but, tell me, before I go, who are these gentlemen, and what is the meaning of the order they each wear?'

'You'll soon know,' he answered; and, advancing to the table, said, in a loud tone, 'Mr. President, and gentlemen, this man has asked me to explain who you are, and the meaning of the order (although he himself wears one) on your breasts. What answer shall I give him?'

Whereupon the President rose, and said, 'Gentlemen, what do you say to trying the traitor now?'

The men round the table silently nodded their heads.

'Good,' rejoined the President. 'Let the trial begin.'

'What does this mean?' I asked of my friend. 'Are they rehearsing a scene from a play? At all events, I'm sorry I can't stay to see the fun. So, if you won't come, I must find my way home alone. So good night. Gentlemen, I have the honour to wish you a very good evening.'

With a polite bow, I turned to the door, and tried to open it; but there was no handle, and I pushed in vain.

Scholvolski came up to me. 'You can't leave yet; these gentlemen have a few questions to ask you; so come and sit down quietly, and answer them, or—'

'Or what?' I asked, indignantly. 'Is this some trap you have led me into? You had better take care. Remember, you are not in Russia.'

'Not much difference, though, in this room.'

'That we shall see,' I said; and, rushing to the door, began hammering at it and shouting at the top of my voice. The whole party smiled at my efforts, which made me more furious; and I redoubled my knocking and calls for help. All at once it opened with a burst that nearly knocked me backwards, and the huge janitor entered. I rushed at the closing

door; but he was too quick for me. It was shut again in an instant; and he stood with his back against it.

'Put him in the chair,' said the President to this big brute.

'All right, master' was his reply, and, walking to a cupboard, he brought out a sort of arm-chair with straps and ropes, which he placed in the centre of the room, and then beckoned me to sit in it.

'No!' I exclaimed, 'I'm not going to be put tamely in that chair;' and I caught up the one I had been leaning against, determined to hold my own. 'What is it you want of me? Is it to rob me? Because, if so, I will quietly give you everything I have; but if you think you are going to play any tricks, you are very much mistaken; for the first man who approaches me I'll brain!'

I had hardly concluded when the big porter threw himself heavily upon me, and, with the assistance of two or three more, I was placed in the chair and bound down so securely as to be unable to move hand or foot. My tongue was free, though; and, most foolishly, I commenced cries for help. In a couple of seconds I was gagged, and then I was indeed helpless.

'Now,' said the President, 'let us get on quickly. Come, Scholvolski, your evidence.'

And, to my astonishment, this man, whom I had thought my friend, took out a small pocket-book, and from it read all the conversations we had had together, the opinions I had expressed to him on secret societies in particular, winding up by telling them how I had displayed to him my new order, and how I had also shown my knowledge of their private whistle.

As he sat down, seemingly perfectly satisfied with what he had done. I was well aware that I was trapped in the den of a Russian secret society which bore me some terrible grudge—whether for having spoken so openly and scoffingly of it, or for wearing the wretched order I had found. How I cursed it and my ill-luck in picking it up!

One after another of the men seated at the table, and to whom I had at times spoken, got up, and repeated all that I had said to them, and generally a good deal more.

When all had had their say, the President rose, and said, 'Gentlemen and brothers, this traitor has to be tried by you on the following charges: first, for having (knowing us all to belong to this society) taken every opportunity of maligning and ridiculing it; secondly, for having, by some means unknown to us as yet—but which we will presently get from him—worn our secret order publicly and ostentatiously, and probably explained to everybody he knows its mysterious meaning.

'You have heard the evidence, gentlemen. How say you, guilty, or not guilty?'

Without a word being spoken, every man held up his hand.

'Guilty on both charges,' added the President. 'And now your sentence.'

Again silently they all raised their hands.

'Death!' said the President. 'Gentlemen and brothers, in your verdict and sentence I fully concur.'

I had nearly fainted as he uttered these last words, and I think I should have done so, but that the porter undid the gag; and the President, rising, addressed me thus: 'Prisoner and traitor,

you have heard the charges, evidence, verdict, and sentence; have you anything to say why it should not be carried out?"

I nerved myself, and as boldly as I could spoke the following words: 'Russians, most of you—particularly one' (and I looked hard at Scholvolski, who dropped his eyes)—'have professed friendship for me; and yet now you want to kill me. Why is this? What have I done? You say I have talked about your secret societies; well, so does every other man you meet; and in Europe everybody says what he thinks. You assert that I have worn your order, knowing it to be the order of your society. This I emphatically deny, as I only picked it up in the streets a few minutes before I met that man' (pointing to the President), for, oddly enough, I had never heard his name.

As I uttered the words 'picked it up' there was a smile of derision; they evidently did not believe me. How was I to prove my words? No one had been near me when I found it.

'Is that all you have to say?' asked the President; 'because that goes for nothing.'

'Let me warn you,' I hotly answered. 'You are not in Russia, where you can get rid quietly of any obnoxious person, but in Europe; and you'll find yourselves with ropes around your necks if you dare to lay violent hands on me.'

'Ho! ho!' laughed the brutal President. 'How clumsy you must think us. Why, you don't suppose that we shall leave your carcase in the streets? But, enough of this. To business——'

'One minute, Frushinkoff,' said Scholvolski.

'Hush! hush! How could you be so imprudent?—before that man, too!'

'Pardon me; it slipped out,' rejoined Scholvolski; 'but I don't think he will ever repeat it.'

While this bye talk had been going on between them, I had been racking my brain to try and remember where I had heard the name of Frushinkoff; when all at once I recollect he was the man who had been at the head of a conspiracy to assassinate the Czar, and was known to be the most cruel, unscrupulous devil in the world. Now I no longer wondered why I had so instinctively mistrusted him; and it was in his merciless hands my life was placed!

'One minute,' resumed Scholvolski, having, apparently, appeased the President. 'I suppose, as usual, we keep a memento?'

'Certainly,' replied the President, and nodded to the porter, who went to the cupboard, and produced a long flat box, which he placed on the table.

'How many will his make?' asked Scholvolski.

'Let's see,' said the President, and with a small gold key attached to his watch-chain, he unlocked the box. How he glared at the contents! 'His will be the ninth!' said the President.

'Pass it round,' asked Scholvolski, who was close to me; and when it was put down in front of him, my curiosity tempted me to look within it too. Heavens! what did I see? A row of mortal thumbs!

I shut my eyes at the horrid sight, and felt my blood run cold on hearing Scholvolski say, with a laugh, 'Karl, you will have to enlarge this space; our friend's thumb here' (and he touched my thumb, which lay outstretched, my arm being bound to the arm of the chair), 'is very large.'

'The night is half over,' said the President, 'and we've lots to do before dawn; so come, Karl,

the hatchet; and, Scholvolski, you write the card to attach to it, as a memoir of to-night's good work.'

Great God! my thumb too large for the space! the hatchet! What does it all mean? I knew I had to die, but not to be tortured to death; not to have my limbs hacked off before my eyes. The thought, was too fearful.

Although I was nearly unconscious, half dead with fright, I have a misty recollection of seeing the huge porter come up to me with a short hatchet in his hand, and unbind my forearm, laying it in a sort of iron groove which he fitted on the arm of the chair; then binding it down again on this, and separating my thumb from the other fingers, by cover them with a sheet of lead, which fitted down tightly to the chair. For the life of me, I couldn't resist the temptation to look at the diabolical machine. I found what I have described above, and also—oh, horror!—my thumb lay on a massive piece of lead, much cut about, and stained bright red!

I now nerved myself for one final dash for liberty and life. 'If I could only get free from the chair, and get hold of that hatchet, I'd back myself to get out—if—' A desperate shake, plunge, and wriggle. No use; the giant was down upon me like an avalanche. I made one more futile attempt at shouting, but was instantly gagged.

When I was fixed, the President said, 'Gentleman and brothers, all is prepared; is it your wish that the traitor shall lose his right thumb?'

They all silently raised their hands.

The President—'Good, it is. Is it also your wish that the thumb shall be put in the box,

and kept as a warning to us all?'

Again they all silently raised their hands.

The President—'It is; and finally, gentlemen, shall he die by our usual method, or have you any fresh suggestions?'

They shook their heads.

'As usual, then,' said the President, adding, 'Are you ready, Karl?'

'Yes, master.'

'Then, at the word "three," off with it.'

Unclosing my eyes for an instant, I found the huge brute standing gloating over me, with his left hand on my right wrist, as it were to steady himself, and the hatchet upraised in the right.

'One!' the President uttered, in a sharp voice.

'Two!'

'Three!'

* * * *

'Where am I? Who are these people standing around my bed?'

'Well, old fellow, how do you feel, eh?'

'Peter! no, it can't be!'

'He's just awake, mamma.'

'Surely that's my sister Julia's voice!'

'Oh, I'm so glad, the dear boy!'

'And that's my mother's.'

In moving, such a pain shot through my right arm that I shrieked. Ah! now I remember. It was no dream, then, after all, but a stern reality. My thumb? Yes, it was missing; and my hand and arm were bound up. But why didn't they kill me? I must get them to tell me. But how came Peter here? Oh, how feeble my voice was.

'Hush!' they all said; 'to-morrow.'

To-morrow came, and still they said to-morrow; and so, many morrows came and went. At last, after about seven to-morrows,

they all assembled round my bed, and kissed me, and asked me how I felt.

'May I talk now?' I asked, eagerly.

'Yes,' they answered, 'for you are saved.'

'Saved!' I exclaimed; 'has it been so bad as that?'

They silently nodded their heads, looking very serious.

'For God's sake, don't do that!' I exclaimed, for it reminded me of that night, and of those silent men.

'Now, Peter, sit down by his bedside, and tell him quietly how you saved his life,' said my mother.

'You saved my life, Peter?'

'Yes, my dear friend; even as you once saved mine. I have never forgotten it, and at last I found an opportunity of returning the compliment. You know, of course, that nearly every Russian belongs to some secret society—I among others. We have our signs, signals, and private orders, which, of course, we only wear *entre nous*. Now for my share in this wretched business.

'Some weeks ago, my firm ordered me to England. My sister was always pining to be there, and my mother was wretched at the thought of separation from me, who had never been away from her before. So we agreed to go to your country, and take you by surprise; and that is the reason you have not heard from us for some time.'

'Is Catrina here, then?' I demanded, excitedly.

'Hush! yes; the doctor wouldn't let you see her before. This afternoon, if you are quiet, you may. But, to resume, I went to your house in the country, and found you were in Homburg; and as I had still a week or two before I began work, I thought I would

bring my mother and Catrina over here with me. Ah, dear me! how unlucky it was I came!'

'Why?'

'If I hadn't come, you would never have picked up that order. If you hadn't picked up that order, you would not have gone through that awful night. And if you hadn't picked up that order, you would have a thumb on your right hand now.'

'But how did your coming do all this?'

'Because,' he answered, slowly, 'that order you picked up I dropped?'

'You?'

'Yes. See here it is,' and unbuttoning his waistcoat, he showed me the unlucky ornament.

'Put it away, for heaven's sake,' I cried, 'it makes my arm ache so!'

'Pardon me, my friend, but I want you to know everything. Now to conclude, and tell you how I came to be lucky enough to save you.'

'On the afternoon we arrived I went off to the post-office to ask for letters. It was there I must have lost this. After dinner I started to ascertain if you were still at the Kursaal. Thinking I might meet some of my secret friends, I looked to see if the order was safe, and found, to my dismay, it was gone! As I walked up to the Kursaal, I carefully looked on the ground which, by the light of the extraordinarily brilliant moon, I could distinguish distinctly. I saw it nowhere. At the post-office I looked carefully, especially on the steps, when an official asked me what I had dropped. I told him a small jewel; he then said he had seen an English gentleman pick it up and fasten it in his coat. Then I was frightened, for if any of my society were to see it in his coat,

it would cost him his life, I knew; so I tore all round the Kursaal, which was shutting up, but could find no trace of any one with the order, nor of you. I wandered about long after the rooms were closed; and at last was going home very disconsolately, when I met a man hurrying along in the opposite direction, and in whom I recognised a Russian friend, a member of my society. We chatted for some minutes, when, looking at his watch, he told me he must hurry, or he should miss the fun.

“What fun?” I asked.

“Oh, some Englishman, or half Russian, half English, has got hold of some of our private signals, knows all about our society, and this very afternoon has been publicly wearing our order; how he got it no one can say. He has been gulled into attending the meeting, and is to be tried to-night. I’m off to see what Frushinkoff and Scholvolski intend to do with him.”

Off we both started, called a carriage, and arrived shortly after at the awful house. The door-keeper wouldn’t admit me at first, because I couldn’t show my order; but, luckily, my friend was a very important member of the society, and became guarantee for me.

We entered the room, and were recognised directly, and every one began to tell us what the culprit had done.

“But the fool has fainted, and we want him to come to, that we may finish him,” said Frushinkoff to me.

“Let me see him,” I said; “I

know a little about medicine, and perhaps can succeed.”

They made way for me, and I stood beside the fainting man. Oh, my friend, what an awful shock! for it was you, my dear, good brother. It was you who had picked up the order I dropped, and had suffered such agony for my carelessness.

I immediately protested against their treatment. I told them it was my order which I had lost; and I referred them to the witness I had met with in the official.

Well, after immense trouble, and on my going security for you with my life, they eventually allowed me to take you away.

There, that’s all; and now you must get well again as quickly as possible.’

‘How lucky you came in time,’ was all I could murmur.

Just then my mother and sister came in, and seeing my wistful glance at the door, Julia smiled and called for Catrina.

She came. How lovely she looked, and how I doated on her!

My story is done. We all returned to England the moment I was well enough. Peter took a small house for his mother and Catrina, close to ours, and we were very happy. In a month or two I married Catrina, and Peter Julia.

I got a good berth with fresh employers, and, having an affectionate wife, am very happy, except when I meet a Russian, and then my arm aches, and my left thumb tingles.



THE TOMB OF VIRGIL.

‘The poet that sang battailes, fields, and sheepe,
Dy’d in Calabria, and here lies asleepe.’

JOHN PENKETHMAN’s Translation, 1624.

FEW places are more pictur-esque, and from the associations connected with them, more interesting, than the tomb of Virgil.

As all will remember, the poet had gone to Greece and Asia to put the finishing touches to his ‘Æneid,’ when he accidentally fell in at Athens with Augustus, on his return from the Levant to Rome, and agreed to go back with him; but being attacked by illness, and the sea voyage increasing his malady, he expired a few days after reaching Brindisi. Finding his end approaching, Virgil asked for his manuscripts, that he might burn the ‘Æneid,’ as an unfinished work; but when it was represented to him that Augustus would not hear of its destruction, he consented to bequeath his writings to his executors, on the condition they should leave the incomplete verses in the state they found them — conditions which Augustus had punctually fulfilled.

His body, by command of Augustus, and according to his will, was carried to Naples, and buried on the Via Pozzuolo; and the epitaph placed upon it, he is said to have dictated himself.*

The ascent to Virgil’s tomb is near the entrance of the Grotto of Posilippo, by stairs cut in the rock. The path is through a vineyard overlooking the beautiful Bay of Naples, its azure surface smooth as glass, and covered with boats

* Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere,
tenet nunc Parthenope; cecini Pascua,
Rura, Duces.

gliding in different directions. Virgil had a villa on its shores, his chief residence, where he composed the ‘Eclogues’ and the ‘Georgics;’ the ‘Æneid’ was written either in this villa or at Naples..

‘Scenes by him portrayed,
Who here was wont to wander, here
invoke
The sacred Muses, here receive, re-
cord
What they revealed, and on the west-
ern shore
Sleeps in a silent grove, o’erlooking
thee,
Beloved Parthenope.’

ROGERS’S *Italy*.

The tomb consists of a vaulted chamber about fifteen feet square; in the wall are ten niches for cinerary urns—in fact, a Roman columbarium. It stands on a kind of platform, on the brow of a precipice on one side, and on the other sheltered by an overhanging rock. An aged ilex spreads from the sides of the rock, and, bending over the ruin, covers it with its ever-verdant foliage, while,

‘Like a mourner’s mantle, with sad
grace,
Waves the dark ivy,’

which, interwoven with various shrubs, clothes the walls, and hangs in festoons over the precipice.

Although tradition has always given to this ruin the name of the tomb of Virgil, and from the earliest periods it has been accepted as such, yet there are not wanting many—Addison, among the others—who question its authenticity. Yet records exist of it in the fourteenth century, when

there was standing in the midst of the sepulchre an urn, supposed to contain the ashes of the poet, supported by nine small marble pillars; and on the frieze above was inscribed his epitaph. Stefano, who saw it in the sixteenth century, states that King Robert of Anjou, fearful lest so precious a relic should be carried off or destroyed during the wars then raging in the kingdom, removed the urn and the pillars, and buried them in the Castel Nuovo. This extreme precaution had an effect very different from what was intended, and occasioned the loss it was meant to prevent; for, notwithstanding the inquiries of Alphonso of Aragon, they were never discovered. Others allege that they were given by Robert of Anjou to the Cardinal of Mantua, for removal to Virgil's birthplace; that the Cardinal, returning by sea, died at Genoa, and all traces of the precious remains vanished with him.

The sepulchre of Virgil must, from the first, have been an object of interest and veneration. His works, which excited such admiration in his lifetime, were, very soon after his death, placed in the hands of children, and made part of the rudiments of early education.

The idolatry of Silius Italicus was so great, he made a pilgrimage to Naples for the purpose of visiting his tomb; and found it deserted, and kept by a solitary peasant. Silius purchased the ground on which it stood, to rescue it from such degradation; and was accustomed, says Pliny, to approach it with the same reverence he would show to a sacred edifice, and to keep, on the spot, the birthday of Virgil as punctually as he would his own.

Petrarch, in company with King Robert of Naples, visited the tomb; and is said to have planted a laurel there; and Boccaccio mainly attributes to the impression made upon him by the sight of the poet's sepulchre, his determination to cast away the ledger and forsake a mercantile life, to follow the paths of literature.

Thus we see that from the earliest period of the revival of letters the tradition has been unbroken, and accepted without question by the older masters of Italian literature.

Although Petrarch planted a laurel, one is also said to have sprung up coeval with the tomb itself, and to have exactly crowned the dome-shaped top of the building, which it overshadowed with its luxuriant branches. It was regarded as a prodigy, because, when despoiled of its largest branches, they shot up afresh; but this is not to be considered as a wonder, for it is the nature of the laurel, when cut to the ground, to sprout up with renewed vigour, like the branch of the golden tree described by Virgil as gathered by Aeneas, before his descent to the infernal regions:

‘When the first is torn away,
Another is not wanting.’

In the last century, the rage for carrying off boughs of the laurel as memorials of the tomb was at its height.

Grosley de Troyes took two of its branches—one for the Academy of Sciences at Paris, the other to crown a young poet at the college at Troyes.

Another French author placed a leaf in his Elzevir edition of the poet, which relic added considerably to the price at which it subsequently sold.

The Margravine of Baireuth

brought back from Italy a branch, which she sent to her brother, Frederick the Great, with these lines, ‘I arrive from Italy, and desired to bring you back something beautiful. I have found nothing more worthy of being offered to you than a branch of the laurel which overshadows the tomb of Virgil.’

A similar present was made to Voltaire; and a like homage was offered to the Abbé Delille, with a poem in which these lines occur:

‘Cet arbre t'appartient, ton nom seul
m'enhardie
A saisir ce débris pour un talent que
j'aime,
Et j'ai pris à Virgile, et le rends à
lui-même’—

an elegant compliment to the translator of the ‘Georgics.’

Chateaubriand also carries off his trophy; but it were vain to record the many ravages sustained by Petrarch’s tree. Out of veneration to the poet, Casimir Delavigne planted a fresh laurel, which in two years again disappeared. As a French writer indignantly exclaims,

‘Ce laurier
Qui fier de ses mille ans, s’éllevant si
superbe,
Coupé dans sa racine, est ignoré dans
l’herbe;
Un mercenaire avide et prompt à
l’outrager,
Trafique de sa gloire et l’offre à l’é-
tranger.’

In 1833 the tree had entirely disappeared under the hand of the spoiler. The ilex and the ivy have taken the place of the withered laurel, and clothed the tomb with perennial verdure. It has now become venerable by the homage which great men for so many ‘centuries have paid it, and where such pilgrims have trod, posterity will regard the spot as

one of those consecrated sites upon which genius has fixed the seal of immortality.’

‘Vespero è già colà dove sepolto
È'l corpo, dentro al quale io facea
ombra.
Napoli l’ha, e da Brundizio è tolto.’
DANTE, *Purgatorio*, iii. 25.

‘It now is evening there, where buried
lies
The body in which I cast a shade, re-
mov’d
To Naples from Brundusium’s wall.’
CARY’s Translation.

In the middle ages the fame of Virgil underwent a singular transformation. From the magic power of his verses, he was supposed to be a magician. Virgil the poet became Virgil the necromancer, endowed with magic powers by Chiron, the learned centaur. Endless were the wonders ascribed to his agency at Rome and Naples. The Grotto of Posilippo, for instance, was perforated by him at the request of Augustus, as the mountain was so infested by serpents and dragons that none but the most daring could venture to traverse it; and even now, after the lapse of eighteen centuries, there is scarcely any public work in the neighbourhood of Naples which is not in some way connected by vulgar tradition with the name of Virgil.

Divination by opening his poem —Sortes Virgilianæ, as it was termed — was early in practice. Perhaps the most singular instance on record is that belonging to our own history.

Charles I. and Lord Falkland, one day in the Bodleian, proposed to try their fate; and the passages at which they opened the book were singularly prophetic.

King Charles’s glance fell on the lines of Dido’s invective against Æneas, in the fourth book, thus rendered by Dryden :

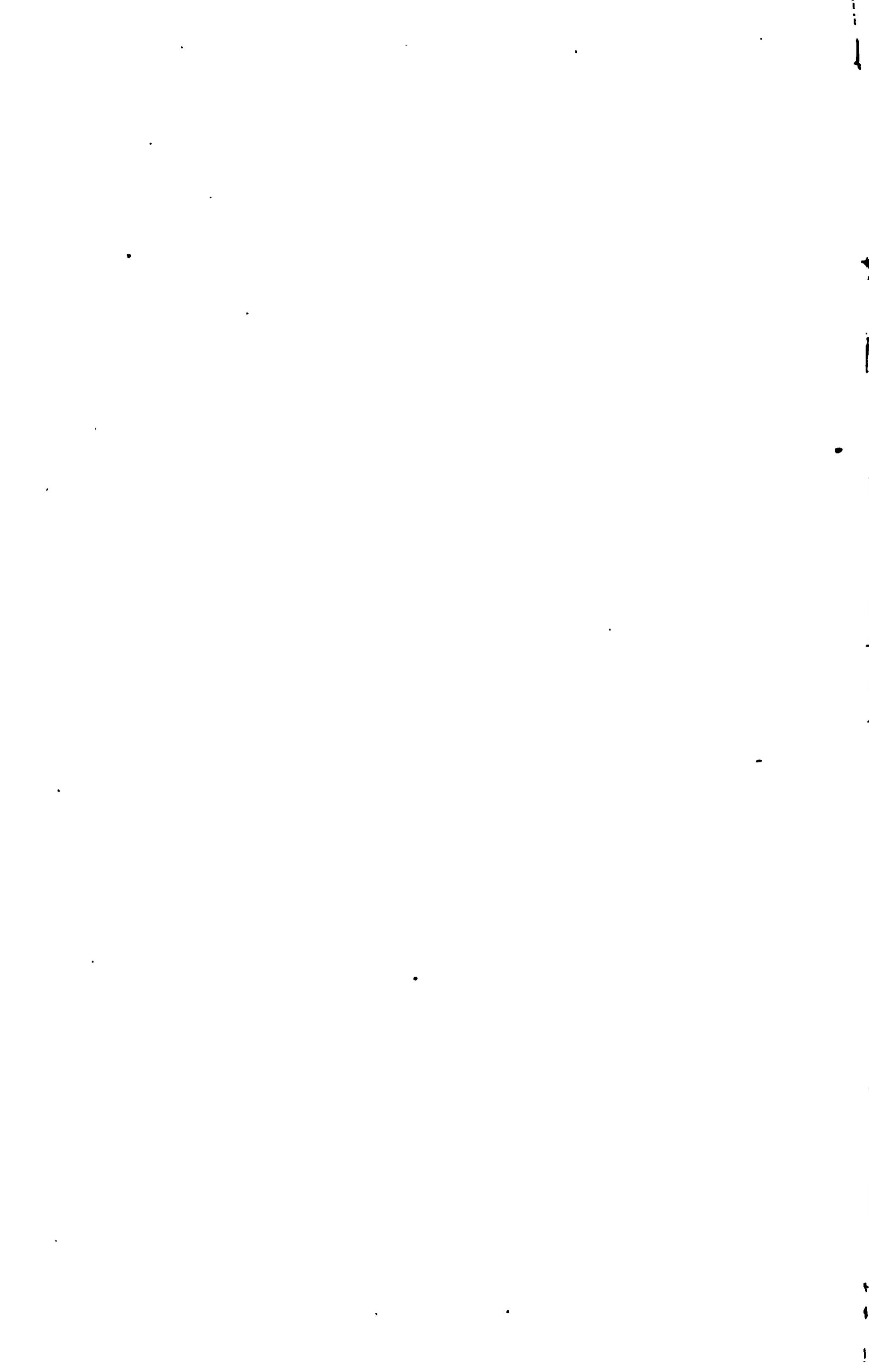
'Torn from his subjects and his son's
embrace,
First let him see his friends in battle
slain,
And their untimely fate lament in
vain :
' And when, at length, the cruel war
shall cease,
On hard conditions may he buy his
peace.
Nor let him then enjoy supreme com-
mand ;
But fall, untimely, by some hostile
hand,
And lie unburied on the barren sand !'

Lord Falkland opened at Evander's lament over his son Palles :

'I warn'd thee, but in vain, for well I
knew
What perils youthful ardour would
pursue.
That boiling blood would carry thee
too far,
Young as thou wert in dangers, raw
to war.
O curst essay of arms ! disastrous
doom !
Prelude of bloody fields, and fights to
come !'

A few months after, he fell at
the fatal fight of Newbury, at the
early age of thirty-four.

F. BURY-PALLISTER.



FLEURETTE.

THE sun still lights the woods with gold,
 Still waves the bracken round our feet,
 The autumn leaves, the hill, the wold,
 Are e'en as when we used to meet ;
 The lake, the lawn, the terrace-ways,
 The grey house by the river set ;
 As in the dead sweet distant days,
 As in the younger years, Fleurette.

But love is dead between us two,
 And yet no tears are in our eyes ;
 Love is no more for me with you—
 Love that, they say, like all things, dies.
 Farewell ! we journey different ways ;
 But parting now brings no regret,
 As in the sweet dead distant days,
 As in the younger years, Fleurette.

Farewell ! farewell ! in some strange place
 Of other worlds, in other times,
 We two may thus meet face to face ;
 We two may piece the broken rhymes ;
 We two may kiss once more, and gaze,
 Our eyes with happy tears made wet,—
 Back on the dead sweet distant days,
 Back on the younger years, Fleurette.

FRED. E. WEATHERLY, B.A.

MRS. PERCY'S PERIL.

THOUGH I am a soldier's wife, I fear I can lay claim to but a small portion of the courage which is usually attributed to them.

Arthur Percy, Captain in Her Majesty's Dragoons, is my husband, and the adventure I am about to relate befell me about eighteen months after our marriage, when the regiment was quartered in Ireland.

A detachment was stationed in one of the most unquiet parts of that country, which I refrain, for obvious reasons, from naming. Arthur was ordered to take command of it, and so I, of course, accompanied him with our baby, an infant of about five months. We thought ourselves very fortunate in having secured a small, but extremely pretty cottage at an almost nominal rent, distant about one mile from the barracks.

I cannot better describe the cottage, than by telling you that it was called, 'The Bungalow,' and, like its namesake, was a long, one-storied building, with a verandah in front of the principal windows. A small entrance hall in which were two doors, was the first thing observed on entering; one led to the drawing-room, dining-room, and three bed-rooms, while the other led directly to the kitchen, servants' rooms, and into a passage leading to the outer offices.

Our establishment consisted of two women servants and one man; the latter, being a soldier, returned every night to the barracks, which happened to be the nearest habitations to us, not even the humblest dwelling breaking the loneliness of the way between them and the Bungalow.

I have already said that the

distance from them was about a mile, and the road, which was partly grass grown, lay through a narrow sort of lane, enclosed on each side by very high hedges.

These hedges were a continual horror to me. Scarcely ever did I see Arthur start in the morning, without visions arising of desperadoes concealed behind them, dressed in the inevitable long-tailed, ragged coat, the high-crowned, narrow-rimmed hat, and the murderous weapon, all of which things I invariably associated with an Irish ruffian.

The Dragoons had been sent to quell some risings, and to support the authorities, consequently they were not regarded by the natives in any very friendly light.

As the weeks went on, and every afternoon brought Arthur safely back to me, my fears were somewhat allayed, and occasionally I walked through the lane towards the town to meet him—always, however, feeling glad when I got safely past any chance passer-by whom I might encounter.

Arthur used to laugh at my fears, and as I knew I was a desperate coward, I tried to think they were groundless, and merely the result of my own natural timidity.

The year was drawing to a close, and on the 10th of January we were to bid adieu to the Bungalow, Ireland, and the Irish. The regiment was under orders for England, in spring, and till then Arthur was to go on leave.

I was in raptures at the prospect of being settled in my own part of the world again, and, best of all, leaving Ireland, against which I entertained so profound a prejudice. It was Christmas

Eve: Arthur was obliged, most unwillingly, to spend it at the barracks, as the few officers there wished to have a farewell dinner, and, in addition, there was to be an entertainment for the soldiers at an early hour.

It had been snowing heavily all day, and when Arthur left, about half-past three o'clock in the afternoon, darkness was beginning to come on.

I had begged of him not to return if the snow continued, as I knew it might be very late ere the party broke up, and I could not bear the idea of his coming home through that dark, narrow road, in the middle of a snowy December night. If he did come, he was to tap at my window, which would enable me to let him in without disturbing the servants, who slept at the other side of the house.

After I had watched his figure disappear, I reentered the cottage, with a disagreeable sense of solitude, and eeriness, which I tried to dispel by ringing for the nurse to bring my baby, stirring the fire into a cheerful blaze, and otherwise occupying myself. Though almost quite dark, it was now only about four o'clock, and the blinds in the little sitting-room were still undrawn. I was sitting on the hearth-rug, with baby on my lap, amusing her with my watch and its glittering appendages, which were an unfailing source of pleasure to her; and as she stretched out her little hands to grasp them, I was suddenly attracted to the direction of the window, through which, to my unutterable horror, I distinguished distinctly the face of a man gleaming upon me. In that swift, momentary glance, I could see that it was a pale, sinister, malevolent countenance, with small, hungry eyes. My heart beat wildly, but

I dissembled my terror well, I suppose, as had I done otherwise, baby and I might have fared differently. So rapidly had I comprehended the necessity for appearing not to have observed him, that I hardly stopped speaking to my baby; but a thousand projects for escape from my present position revolved themselves through my whirling brain. How could I escape from that little room, with its dark, unshaded window? Furtively I looked again, and was infinitely relieved to find that the apparition had vanished, for the present at least, from its late close proximity to the window. I got up at last, still chattering to my unconscious child, and moved slowly towards the door, even pausing for an instant at the table, partly to gather strength to proceed, as my limbs were tottering beneath me: partly because I dreaded lest the lurker without might still be marking my movements. I had scarcely strength left to turn the handle of the door, but once on the other side of it, I rushed across the little hall, and gained the kitchen, where I found my two domestics seated at their tea.

I briefly told them of the fright I had got, and was not much reassured on finding that both were, if possible, greater cowards than I was myself.

The sound of a whistle at no great distance from the cottage roused me to the necessity of instantly making every place as secure as possible. Accompanied by the two trembling servants, and with baby in my arms, I began my tour of inspection. At last, every bolt was drawn, every shutter closed, and nothing more remained to be done. I found, on looking at the clock, that it was little past five, so that a long evening was before me.

Not a sound was to be heard, nothing fresh occurred to alarm us in the least, and at last I grew almost ashamed of the panic I had given way to, merely from having seen a man glance through the window. Very probably he was some strolling vagrant who had been attracted by the bright light of the fire to look in, without an idea of doing us any harm.

So I reasoned with myself, and so I tried to reassure the servants. Under any circumstances, I was glad to feel that we were safely shut up for the night, and determined to go soon to my room, where I felt less lonely than in the empty drawing-room.

Had there not been the chance of Arthur returning, I would have proposed that the servants should sleep in a bed there happened to be in his dressing-room; but as they assured me they were not at all afraid, now that nothing more had been heard of the man, and I knew it would be a great nuisance to Arthur, if he did return, I concluded that it was wiser to let them sleep in their own room, though it was at some distance from mine.

I went to my room at about half-past nine, and proceeded to undress; after which I put on my white flannel dressing-gown, placed my candles behind me, and seating myself in front of the fire, began to read.

In spite of all my assurances to myself and my servants, I felt strangely nervous and restless. My book was a very interesting one; but it failed to obliterate from my mind the horrible remembrance of the face at the window. Perhaps he was there still—perhaps he was watching for Arthur's return to waylay and murder him. All sorts of wild visions presented themselves to my mind. Once baby moved slightly,

and it made me start nearly to my feet with terror.

I was thoroughly upset, and the only thought that consoled me was, that I had begged Arthur not to return; so he was, no doubt, safely at the barracks, little dreaming of my state of mind.

It was snowing heavily still. I knew it by the dropping that came steadily down the chimney. The atmosphere seemed to choke me, somehow. And ever and anon I found myself listening intently.

The hall clock struck eleven; every stroke vibrating through me. Still I sat on; my fire growing dim, and myself feeling cramped, cold, and almost immovable.

What was I so afraid of? I asked myself a hundred times. I could not tell; it was a vague, shadowy terror that seemed to be chaining me down. I had heard of people's hair turning white in a night from fear. Surely mine would be as snowy as the ground without, if I had to spend the whole night thus.

Oh, for the sound of Arthur's voice—perhaps I should never hear it again—perhaps he would never know what a night I had spent, as either he or I might be murdered before morning. Half-past eleven—only thirty minutes since the clock struck. In eight hours our servant from the barracks would come, even if Arthur had settled not to return till the morning—eight hours of this!

A quarter from twelve! By a mighty effort, I forced myself to get up; glancing at the glass, my own ghostly reflection terrified me. I laid my watch under my pillow, and was in the act of lying down beside baby—not to sleep, as till two o'clock, I should hope for Arthur—when a sound, awful, wild, unearthly, broke the stillness of the dark December night. It was a scream from a woman's

voice in dire distress; another followed, and it came from somewhere within the house. Not a moment did I hesitate.

Springing out of bed, and putting on only my slippers, happily having kept on my dressing-gown, I seized up my child, pausing only to snatch up her little shawl that lay beside her on the bed, I unbarred my shutter, opened the window, and the next moment was on the verandah. It needed not a third wild shriek to impel me to a speed beyond what I had ever dreamt of as possible.

In a second or two I was beyond the gate, flying for life, for my own and another existence, dearer far, in my arms clasped tightly to me—flying through the lanes, past the dreaded hedges, on, stumbling now and then, but recovering myself only to resume my race for life with greater desperation. Death surely was behind us, but a refuge was already looming in front of me. If the pale, piercing face of the outside watcher overtook me now, what would be my fate?

God was merciful indeed to me, and gave me the power to proceed in my awful extremity.

Heaven's portals could hardly have been more rapturously reached than the barrack-gates, as I flew inside of them. I saw a group of men standing in the doorway, and towards them I rushed, recognizing, to my unutterable thankfulness, amongst them, my husband.

His amazement may be better imagined than described, as he beheld us; and as I could not do more than point behind me, I believe poor Arthur must have thought I had gone suddenly raving mad. I only heard their voices murmuring round me, and I felt baby lifted out of my arms, though they told me afterwards I

held her so tightly they could scarcely separate us. The next thing I knew was, that Arthur had laid me on a sofa in a bright, warm room, and that we were safe—Arthur, baby, and I—and together!

But the servants! I conveyed to Arthur, as coherently as I could, the events of the afternoon and night, and my conviction that nothing short of murder had been committed. In less than five minutes he was off, with some of the others, to the cottage, where an awful scene presented itself to their view as they entered.

In the passage from the kitchen to the entrance hall lay the dead body of our unfortunate cook. A blow from some heavy weapon had actually smashed in the back of her head, and life was quite extinct; our other servant was found in an insensible state, but, after some time, recovered sufficiently to be able to give the particulars of the attack, and a description of their assailant, who proved to be no other than the monster who had glared in upon me that very afternoon. It seemed that, after I had seen that everything was secure, the servants had gone out to the coal-house, and during their temporary absence from the kitchen door, the ruffian had slipped in, secreted himself in a cupboard in the passage, and thus been actually locked into the house with ourselves!

Imagining, it was supposed, that Arthur would not return, and knowing that we had a good deal of plate in the house, he had arranged to begin operations after all was quiet, and the first scream I had heard had been elicited from the unfortunate servants, at whose bedside he suddenly appeared.

The miscreant had struck down the cook while she attempted to escape, which, happily for herself,

the other servant was too paralysed to do. The scream I had heard as I left the house must have been the last dying one of the poor cook, whom the murderer had pursued and overtaken before she could gain my door, which was, no doubt, the point to which she was flying for succour. Not a moment too soon had I gone. An accomplice had been admitted by the front door, which was found wide open, my bed-room door shattered, but nothing touched, my flight having, doubtless, scared them. The tracts of their pursuing footsteps were discerned easily, when the blessed morning light of Christmas Day shone. They had evidently gone in pursuit of me, but probably my safety was due greatly to the whiteness of my garments, which must have rendered my flying figure almost invisible against the snowy ground. The police were soon in quest, and ere many hours elapsed the retreat of the assassins was discovered.

A desperate struggle ensued, and recognising in the one man an escaped and notorious convict, and in the conflict feeling his own life was in danger, the constable

fired on him, and the miserable corpse was conveyed to the Police Station, where our servant identified it as the murderer of the cook, and the assailant of herself. The wretched man had, with his companion and accomplice, escaped only two days before from prison, to which the latter was safely escorted back by a couple of policemen. The funeral of our poor servant took place a few days afterwards, and the Bungalow was finally deserted by us. The other servant recovered completely, and the policeman, who had been wounded by the convict rather severely, was reported convalescent before our departure.

I never saw the Bungalow again ; and very joyfully did I enter the steamer which conveyed us to dear old England.

Neither baby nor I suffered any bad effects from our midnight race through the Irish lanes ; but when I think of its terrors, I lift up my heart in fervent gratitude to God, who preserved us when encompassed by perils so profound, and guided so graciously my faltering footsteps, as I fled through the snow on my first and last lonely Christmas Eve.



LADY LUNE.

THE golden day was over,
 A glorious day in June;
 And up from the shimmering ocean
 Slow rose the lady moon.

And the wavelets on the shingle
 Rippled a slumbrous tune,
 Whilst an angel's voice was singing
 A lay to ' la belle lune !'

An angel, yes, though earth-born.
 The sheen of those violet eyes
 I knew were but reflections
 Of hues from Paradise.

Those tresses bathed in moonlight,
 That vestment's classic fold,
 Seemed an angel's snowy mantle,
 And radiant crown of gold.

And I almost feared to see her
 Join 'sister spirits' fair,
 And ascend to the asphodel meadows
 Up yonder silver stair.

So I drew her closer to me,
 And her hand more tightly press'd ;
 And lovingly her beauteous head
 She pillow'd upon my breast.

She was mine, she vowed, mine only,
 Whilst moons should wax or wane ;
 She longed to give her virgin troth
 To me in holy fane.

She sought not rank or honours,
 She spurned the thought of gold ;
 The love I proffer'd to her
 Was more than wealth untold.

She would share my name and fortunes,
 It could not be too soon :
 She invoked, to witness that maiden vow,
 The changeable lady moon.

And I kiss'd, and rebaptiz'd her,
 To those wavelets' slumbrous tune,
 By, alas ! the ominous title
 Of beautiful Lady Lune.

* * *

She deserved it. Next November,
 She married a big dragoon ;
 She shares his wealth. She owns his name.
 She is now *bis* Lady—Loon !

Drawn by L. Caldecott.

THE LAST MEET

- 250000

- 100000

CARDS OF INVITATION.

BY THOSE WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THEM.

III.—THE READING OF A PLAY IN THE GREEN-ROOM.

WELL! It was not exactly a 'card of invitation' which I had received. But, still my 'invitation' to attend the 'Reading of a Play in the Green-room' was quite as much deserving of the appellation as are the invitations of the hundreds of young gentlemen who, anxious to show their dainty persons in what are called 'good houses' in London Society, 'tout' for the coveted privilege with a zeal, a persistence, and an indefatigable effrontery, which are frequently rewarded with the happiest ends to their aims.

Now, all the success obtained by the young gentlemen above mentioned has seldom the result of actually bringing them permanently within the pale of good society; and as little did the success of my modest efforts to obtain an entrance within the sacred precincts of a theatre—the goal of *my* ambition—place me permanently in that close communion with the stage, and all its elements, for which I had so ardently longed. My first, my last, my only introduction within one of those mysterious temples of dramatic art, the dingy interiors of which were to my imagination halls of dazzling light, was in this wise.

From my earliest childhood all my thoughts, all my aspirations, all my day-dreams have, by some mysterious influence, been riveted on the drama and the stage. I say 'mysterious,' because nothing in education or early association can account for its power over me. It seemed like a gift, for good or

for evil, bestowed on me, at my birth, by a fairy godmother. It was an inborn instinct, I assert, in spite of any wise philosophical or psychological theory to the contrary. What volumes of plays have I not read, as soon as I could read for my own amusement, when other boys hankered after books of travel or works of fiction! What 'sets' of scenes have I not discovered in valley and rock, and river and terraced stairs! With what awe, mixed with deferential admiration, have I not gazed on a man of no very prepossessing appearance, when I was told he was actually a 'live actor,' wondering all the while how such a mighty being could tread the common streets like other common mortals.

Chance one day threw me in the way of that 'gifted creature'—he was a 'gifted creature' in *my* esteem—a dramatic author! My delight, when the wonderful man actually addressed me in familiar terms, can never be forgotten. That we should ever be friends was an idea then beyond all my most ardent hopes. Yet friends we did become, spite of the shyness of my homage. I heard from him of the stage, of the actors of the day, of the interiors of theatres—and I drank in his every word with a wildly beating heart. I was never wearied of a conversation which he jeeringly called 'shop-talk.' But now wild aspirations began to spring up within me. Could I possibly, by the influence of the 'gifted creature,' ever penetrate

into that wonderful region called 'behind the scenes?' My vague and modest hints to this intent did not seem to meet with any promise of a possible fulfilment of my desires, however; and I was even told that managers were very adverse to the admission of 'outsiders' within their mysterious realm.

My faint hopes had grown so faint as almost to have died of inanition, when one day I received a letter—I have ventured to call it a 'card of invitation.' It has been framed and glazed, and hung up in my pet sanctum, as I have known to be done by ambitious ladies with an invitation to Court. And yet it was no such great work of literary merit. It ran as follows (the words have been long since stereotyped on my brain):—

'If it doesn't bore you, old fellow, you can come with me behind the scenes to-morrow—not at an evening performance, for that's no go, you know, besides being the dullest thing in life. But I am about to read a new play, which has just been accepted, in the Green-room of the theatre to-morrow at twelve. I told old Briggs, the manager, that you were my *collaborateur*, and must be present at the reading. So, if you like to come, you must put on the airs of a co-author, and not blow the gaff. Call for me at the G—, 11·45 sharp.'

If it didn't bore me! Good heavens! wasn't one of my most audacious hopes about to be realised? And I was to appear as an author—a dramatic author! What a halo, although an altogether false and spurious one, seemed suddenly to have been shed around my brow! I was to come before a dramatic public—a limited one, it is true—as a 'gifted creature' myself. How was I to demean myself? what 'airs' was

I to assume? I trembled with nervousness on debating these doubtful questions in my mind. To my shame, I must confess my utter want of all scruple in usurping a crown of glory which was not—never would be—mine. But I seemed lured on by a witch-spell.

I slept little that night; and my dreams were feverish and wild. On the next day I presented myself at the club, before the appointed hour, in my fear of being too late. My friend was not there. Had he forgotten his invitation to me? There was distraction in the thought. The appointed hour went by; and I had begun to despair, when I saw the 'gifted creature' coming along the street. I had expected to see him in a state of feverish excitement. He wore the calmest aspect imaginable. To what will not long habit bring a man? I thought. He simply said, 'Ah! here you are, old boy! Come along!' as he took my arm, and walked leisurely and impassively in the direction of the theatre. I ventured, as we proceeded, to express my surprise at seeing him so little nervous. 'Not nervous?' he answered, with a laugh, 'Of course I am awfully nervous. The reading of one's own play in a green-room is one of the most trying episodes in an author's career. Why, I am going to be put on the rack—thumb-screwed—tortured—flayed alive. You'll just see, my dear fellow. Not nervous? I should think I am, indeed! But you know the old saying about the skinning of eels.'

We arrived, by a narrow, dirty lane, before a dingy portal, on which were still discernible the half-obliterated letters, 'Stage Door.' Could this shabby, flapping block of wood be the entrance to the paradise of light, which I

aspired to see beyond? No time for thought. A nod and a word from my friend to a very shady old gentleman in a black night-cap, who sat behind a sort of glazed counter.—I afterwards learned that this was an official dignified by the name of 'door keeper,'—and I found myself dragged down some very rickety steps, which seemed to have remained unwashed since the Deluge, and then into a strange place, which at first looked to me like the abode of Chaos. A few straggling gleams of what might be sunlight without, but within seemed only streaks of faintly-lighted dust, made 'darkness visible.' Strange gaunt rows of woodwork and canvas were just discernible; glimpses of bare walls here and there—the rest a mystery of depressing gloom. A sort of intuition seemed suddenly to reveal to me that I stood on the actual stage! Could this be? My foot on the boards of a stage! Could this chaotic space be the illuminated temple, in which I had so often worshipped, at a discreet distance, from the great altar of the drama? I trembled with a strange fever, swerved a little from the path along which I followed, stumbling, and caught sight of a semi-circular dark cavern beyond, draped with white sheets—a spectral cavern! I had scarce time to reflect whether it were possible that this might be the gorgeously painted and gilded auditorium, the 'hall of dazzling light' in which I had so often sat, a humble neophyte—when my friend the author seized me by the hand, and with the cry, 'Hallo! where are you going?' This way, old boy,' pulled me in my bewildered state through a doorway, at which I again stumbled on a step, and nearly fell.

Where was I? In a narrow

room, furnished only with benches round the walls, a table flanked by a chair or two, a glass over a mantelpiece, an old piano, and a water-tap in a corner, with a small basin. It was not at first that I took in these scanty accessories of the scene. The room, with its dingy drab paper, conveyed at first a very indistinct impression, imperfectly lighted as it was by a window looking out on a lane. It was only by degrees that the consciousness forced itself on me that this was the redoubtable 'green-room,' the mysterious sanctuary where celebrated actors and actresses—they were all 'celebrated' in my esteem—congregated at night in gorgeous attire; where wit and pleasant jest abounded nightly—such, at least, was the vain fancy of my inexperience—and where the 'gifted creature' was about to read that dramatic work which was to bring him additional fame. Alas, how my previous illusions fell! This the 'green-room' of a theatre! This dreary and prosaic hole the sanctuary of sanctuaries! Where, too, was the traditional colour of the walls? There was nothing 'green' about the place, except in the baize cloth on the table, and—if the stale joke may be pardoned me—in the inexperienced mind of the novice to the scene. By-the-way, I resolved to ask 'Notes and Queries'—although my constitutional diffidence has prevented my doing so as yet—whence was derived the totally misleading epithet of 'green' bestowed on these appendages to theatres.

Two or three men, chiefly attired in shabby black suits, stood in the room. My friend nodded to them familiarly. 'Utility gents,' he whispered to me. I smiled, without exactly understanding the expression.

Still, I had a vague idea that he somehow meant that they were useful members of the company. 'No one here,' said the author, impatiently — rather cruel the phrase, I thought, to the poor men already assembled — 'why, Hopkins!' A sharp-visaged, rather careworn - looking little man bustled in. 'The prompter,' said my friend to me, in an explanatory stage 'aside.' 'Why, Hopkins,' he pursued, pulling out his watch, and then pointing to a written notice on the chimney-piece, 'the reading was called at 12. It is now a quarter past, and no one here!' 'Well, sir——' began Hopkins, in a deprecatory tone. He was cut short by the entrance of a portly gentleman, gorgeous with velvet collar and an exuberance of watch-chain, who shook hands cordially with the author. 'Mr. Briggs, our respected manager. My collaborateur, you know, Briggs,' said the 'gifted creature,' with a slight wink at me. I was thus introduced to the great potentate, and had the honour of having my hand clasped in his. 'Why, Hopkins,' commenced Mr. Briggs, likewise pulling out his watch. 'Everybody here, sir, I believe,' anticipated Hopkins; and he bustled out of the room.

Several ladies and gentlemen, apprized probably by the prompter, now began to put in an appearance. The author nodded, smiled, shook hands, and now and then introduced my embarrassed and blushing individuality in an off-hand way.

I knew them all; although, I must confess, it was not without difficulty that I sometimes identified the personage before me with the individual whom, from a distance, I had gazed on with admiration when on the stage. The 'heavy man,' whom I had generally seen with truculent

visage, smiled on me with a round, benign face, much flushed, especially about the nose. The 'juvenile'—the passionate young lover, so admired by the female portion of the audience—seemed to have had the weight of twenty additional years, at least, stamped on his face since I last saw him 'from the front.' Was it possible? Could that sallow-faced, melancholy-looking, frowning man be the 'low comedian' who had so often made the tears run down my cheeks with laughter? Yes, it was so! The 'comic old man,' too, so hearty and genial on the stage, only responded to my courteous salutation with a grunt, and looked as if he would have resented my intrusion by a blow from his heavy stick. Again; how unlike was the 'walking lady,' with her seal-skin cloak, profuse jewelry, and rather noisy laugh, to the sentimental object of my homage, in white muslin and pink sash, whom I had seen so harshly treated by flinty-hearted fathers! In that still more gorgeously-attired lady, with the double eye-glass on her nose, and haughty air, I had still greater trouble in recognising my 'smart chamber-maid,' whom I had been accustomed to applaud in her neat cotton gown and her trim apron. One pleasant-looking gentleman I failed to recognise at all, spite of all my efforts. I might have spared myself any trouble. I had never seen him before; for I learned afterwards that it was the scene painter, nowadays considered as essential at a 'reading' as any actor concerned in the new play.

I had scarcely time to take this rapid inventory of the company, when the great Mr. Briggs broke in with 'Come, come, let's begin.' The company ranged themselves on the benches round the room.

'Hallo! where's Miss Montgomery?' suddenly exclaimed the manager. 'Not come,' said Hopkins, who had taken his seat also. 'Pon my word, it's too bad! She's always late!' growled Briggs. 'Well, we can't wait.'

My friend, the 'gifted creature,' took his seat at the back of the table. A chair was found for me by his side. I now began to understand what a nervous matter was the whole affair; for I felt myself like a prisoner at the bar, arraigned before a severe court. My friend now also showed unmistakable symptoms of nervousness. He cleared his throat—he sipped some water from a glass placed by his side—he cleared his throat again. At last, as if with the resolve of desperation, he began to read—the title!

At this juncture the great Miss Montgomery, the leading lady, sailed into the room. 'Can't help it; my coachman was not up to his time,' she said, before the manager could utter any expostulation. 'Well, well, sit down, Miss Montgomery,' said Briggs, in a testy tone, which the lady's frown obviously resented. After some bustle, during which a proper place was found for the 'leading lady,' the same process as before began. The author cleared his throat, sipped water, cleared his throat again, and proceeded to read—the title!

It was perfectly delightful and edifying to see the animation depicted, at first, on the faces of the assembled company. It seemed to me an eager appreciation of every word uttered by the 'gifted creature.' But, to my surprise and growing vexation, I speedily found that this flush of excitement lasted only during the reading of the *dramatis personæ*, and that each actor and actress had only been eager to pick out of the

characters the identical one which he or she considered would naturally fall to his or her 'line of business.' This little matter settled in each mind, the general air of the whole company only expressed the utmost indifference, except when the name of the personage each had allotted, in his or her mind, to his or her own capacity, was pronounced. Then some degree of animation was expressed by the one, two, or more individuals who were supposed to be needed for the scene, to die away into apathy and utter inattention as soon as they disappeared from the immediate action of the play.

I looked around me for the greater part of the time with feelings of pity for my author, whose susceptibilities and responsibilities I was also supposed to share. When not directly interested, the leading lady leaned back with an air of piteous resignation; the walking lady and soubrette admired each others' bracelets and other jewelry in low whispers, with faces indicative of any other feeling than that of genuine admiration; the 'old lady' of the company—I trust she will pardon me for not giving her previously a special mention—did what I believe is called tatting work during the whole reading, without once raising her eyes. I gave her, at least, the credit of listening, perhaps without true cause. The 'leading man' closed his eyes, as if with the intention of an intermittent slumber. The juvenile curled his moustaches or picked his teeth incessantly. The low comedian seemed to me to be intensely interested in catching imaginary flies for some grim and melancholy purpose; whereas the 'walking gentleman,' or second lover, sat motionless, with his gorgeous eyes fixed on the ceiling,

dreaming perhaps of that beautiful duchess who was to fall desperately in love with his engaging form from a side box. The 'old man' grunted at intervals, but whether from chronic asthma, or disapprobation of his part, it was impossible for me to determine.

Not a laugh, not a murmur of approbation enlivened the reading, during which the author was evidently growing more and more nervous, to judge from his uneasy cough, and his repeated sippings of the water by his side. The silence was only broken by an occasional yawn, a deprecatory 'Hem!' a shuffling of feet, or a suppressed titter among the ladies at some joke between themselves. Where were the cordial sympathy, the excitement, the admiration, the intimate relations of feeling between the author and the actors on whom his fate depended, which I had expected? I may well ask 'Where?' I began to wish I had never come. I felt for my poor friend, who seemed to me to be really lain on the rack. Some of his torture was naturally due also to his imaginary *collaborateur*; and I cannot say that I bore it 'like a man.' My spirits sank more and more, till I felt that I was utterly collapsing; and I longed to shriek aloud for mercy.

The weary reading came at last to a close. It seemed to me to have lasted for ages. The manuscript was closed; and the author looked around with a faint, sickly smile and a bow. The assembled auditors rose to their feet. The prompter took up several smaller manuscripts from the table —they, I learned afterwards, were the copied 'parts,' from which the actors were expected to study their words—and distributed them to the various members of the company. The author emerged from behind the rampart of the table;

and the late scene of apparent apathy and indifference became, all at once, one of animation, not to say excitement. 'At last,' I thought to myself, 'the actors are about to congratulate the author on his brilliant work, and I have done them wrong.' But the thought was only for a moment, and died almost as soon as born in my mind.

The author, conscious probably, from long experience, of the scene likely to ensue, had followed the manager hastily to the door, with an evident air of pressing business; but the 'leading lady' intercepted him, and drew him back into the corner where I still sat in shrinking modesty. 'Now, look here,' she said, in a perfectly audible stage whisper: 'Miss Verdant has at least a dozen lines in her part more than I have. That will never do, you know. You must write me in at least two good long speeches, if you expect me to play the part.' 'Or cut down Miss Verdant,' said the author, jestingly, endeavouring to make his escape. 'I suppose that would do as well.' He slipped away from the fascinating 'leading lady' only to be intercepted again by the 'heavyman.' He too wanted his part enormously 'written up.' 'I say, my boy,' said the low comedian in his turn, in the most solemn tones, 'what can I do with that part you have written for me? There isn't a joke in it from the beginning to the end. You must put in a few bits of fat for me, or it's no go.' The 'juvenile,' whose part on this occasion was that of a buoyant 'light comedian,' insisted on a bit of pathos. 'Pathos, you know, old fellow, is my strong point; and the audience will expect it. If they don't get it, you'll be damned to a certainty.' The 'second lover' begged, with much dignity, to throw up his part altogether. He had

not, he said, been accustomed to appear as a rejected lover in private life, and he must decline to appear in so degrading a character on the boards.* The 'old man' declared that his part was only fit for a 'second,' talked with much authority about the elder Farren, for whose 'line' he was engaged, and threw his written part, with an air of insulted supremacy, on the table. The smart 'chamber-maid' insisted that it was necessary for the success of the piece that a comic man-servant should be introduced, with whom she could have a 'jolly' scene or two. Every one had some word to say in disparagement of part or piece, except the 'old woman,' who had walked away, with her usual air of stolid indifference, and the expression of a being resigned to any fate.

The author promised or avoided promising, chaffed one, argued with others, referred generally to the management, and contrived at last to get away without the loss of his temper or his coat-buttons. How he achieved the feat I cannot tell to this day. I followed, in a generally depressed and limp condition, fully persuaded that such discordant elements could never

be made to amalgamate, and that the fortunes of the piece were irretrievably ruined.

I ventured to say as much to my 'gifted' friend, as we emerged into the fresh air through the dingy stage door, with the feeling, at least on my part, that we had struggled out of a slough of despond. He only laughed.

'My dear fellow,' he said, cheerily enough, 'what did I say about the skinning of seals? I am used to it.'

'But the piece was an utter failure at the reading,' I said, not without hesitation.

He laughed again.

'Take this for a general rule,' he replied: 'When a piece is a green-room success it almost invariably comes to grief. When it is read without one murmur of applause or the faintest smile, and all the actors look disgusted, it is generally a great "go." I don't know why this should be; but so it is. I put it down among the many inexplicable mysteries of the stage. I am in the best of spirits. From the green-room reception of the piece to-day, I augur that it will probably be a success.'

It was so.

* Historical.

'NO INTENTIONS.'

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,' 'VERONIQUE,' ETC.

CHAPTER III.

COLONEL MORDAUNT is the best specimen of a fine old English gentleman that Irene has ever come across. She sees that at the first glance. Of middle height, with a well-knit figure, florid complexion, good features, and hair with the lustre of grey satin on it, he presents all the outward qualifications that go to make up the picture of a man of birth and breeding, and she takes a fancy to her new relative at once. Mrs. St. John, too, who is in an unusual state of flush and flutter, seems to have been quite overcome by the unexpected encounter.

'Is it not strange,' she keeps on repeating, 'that we should have met here—in Brussels—after so many years? Irene, my dear! you will welcome Colonel Mordaunt, I am sure, if only for your poor father's sake.'

The girl comes forward with her hand extended, and the stranger, with old-fashioned politeness, and dead and gone chivalry, raises it respectfully to his lips.

'Poor Tom!' he murmurs as he does so; 'poor Tom! I can trace a slight likeness to him as he was, even in your blooming face, my fair young cousin.'

'She was always thought to have a look of him,' sighs the mother, 'but I scarcely imagined it was so apparent. Oh, Irene! you cannot think what a comfort it is for me to have stumbled on your cousin in this way—so weak and good-for-nothing as I am. You will never need to stay at home now for want of an escort—Colonel Mordaunt says he will be charmed to take you anywhere.'

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'With your own kind permission,' interposes Colonel Mordaunt.

'You are very good,' replies Irene. 'Are you, then, staying in Brussels?'

'I am here for a few days, on my way back to England. I have been spending the summer at the Baths.'

'Not remedially, I trust?' says Mrs. St. John, with a sudden anxious glance of interest at the robust-looking man who stands before her.

'Well, I cannot quite say no: though precautionary would be the better word. You remember our family tendency to gout, Mrs. St. John? Poor Tom used to have a twinge of it occasionally, and it was the complaint that carried off my grandfather. I have had one or two warnings during the last four years, and so I took advantage of the hot weather to put myself to rights for the season.'

'The season!' echoes Mrs. St. John, to whom there is no season but one.

'The hunting season! It sounds very dreadful, does it not? but I fear there is no other season that conveys any interest to my ears. I am master of the hounds down in my part of Leicestershire, and spend my days between the stables and the kennel. It is a fine sport, Mrs. St. John, and a man must have something to do.'

'Then, I suppose you are very anxious to get home again,' remarks Irene.

'I was anxious to do so, I confess, but I have no intention of stirring now, so long as I can be

of any use to you or to your mother.'

'How kind!' murmurs Mrs. St. John; and her daughter adds, 'I am afraid you will find shopping and sight-seeing very tame work for which to exchange the pleasures of the field, Colonel Mordaunt.'

'Without their motive, perhaps—yes. With their motive, they can admit of no rivalry in my eyes!'

'What an extremely polite old gentleman!' exclaims Irene, as soon as the Colonel has disappeared. However did you find him out, mother?'

'By the simplest accident in the world. He opened the door of my sitting-room in mistake for his own. I never was so surprised in my life. I nearly screamed!'

'Then you have met him before?'

'Yes—O yes!—of course—many years ago.'

'But why have I never seen him, then? He says he lives in Leicestershire: why did he never come to my father's house?'

Mrs. St. John looks uneasy. She shifts about in her chair, and rolls up her satin cap-strings till they are ruined, and talks rapidly with a faint guilty colour coming and going in her faded cheeks.

'Well, to tell you the truth, dear, your father and Colonel Mordaunt, although cousins, were not the best of friends; that is to say, they once had a quarrel about something, and after that they ceased to visit each other.'

'It must have been a serious quarrel to cause such a complete separation. Are you sure that Colonel Mordaunt was not the one in the wrong, mother? Would my father have liked us to become intimate with him again?'

Irene has a great reverence for

the memory of her father; she is always questioning what he would or would not have wished them to do, sometimes to the ruffling of her mother's placid temper.

'Dear me, Irene! I should think you might trust me to judge of such matters! Do you think I would have introduced him to you otherwise? The disagreement had nothing to do with Colonel Mordaunt's conduct. He behaved extremely well throughout the whole affair. Only your father did not choose that the intimacy should be renewed.'

'And yet he was his nearest relative.'

'Quite the nearest. You know what a small family ours is—ridiculously small, in fact. Your great-grandfather was a Baddenall, and his two daughters, co-heiresses, became respectively Mrs. Mordaunt and Mrs. St. John; and each left an only son—your father and this cousin. You see how absurdly it makes the family dwindle! There are females, of course, but they don't count—your own married aunts, you know; but Colonel Mordaunt's sister is still single. So you see, if you are to have any family at all on your father's side, it would be quite wrong not to make friends with this man, now that we have so happily fallen in with him again. And, indeed, the quarrel was about nothing that need concern you, Irene; nothing at all.'

'I will take your word for it, mother. Colonel Mordaunt does not look like a man who would do a mean or dishonourable thing. And at all events, it is not necessary to quarrel for ever.'

'It would be very wrong and senseless to do so. You will find him a most interesting companion; full of life and conversation, and with that charming deference in his manner towards women which

one so seldom meets with in young men now a days. They have not improved since the time when I was young.'

'I suppose not,' says her daughter, with a sigh; and then she laughs, quite unnecessarily, except to hide that sigh. 'I really like Colonel Mordaunt, mother, and should be sorry not to be able to take advantage of his overtures of friendship. I think he is one of the handsomest old men I ever saw, and his manners are quite courtier-like.'

'You should have seen him when he was young!' replies her mother, with an echo of the sigh that Irene was keen enough to check.

Colonel Mordaunt fully bears out the promise of his introduction. He is with them every day—almost every hour; he is at the beck and call of Irene St. John from morning until night.

If she desires to attend the Marché aux Fleurs at five o'clock A.M., to lay in flowers and fruit for the day's consumption, Colonel Mordaunt, faultlessly attired for the occasion, is waiting to attend her footsteps, even though it has cost him half his night's rest in order to be up and dressed in time.

Does she express a wish to visit the Quinconce, and push her way amongst a mob of Bruxellois at eight o'clock at night, or to attend opera or fête, still is the faithful gentleman ready to accompany his young cousin wherever she may choose to go, only anxious to be made use of in any way, so long as the way accords with her own desires. And he is really no less desirable than pertinacious a chaperon, this Colonel Mordaunt; so highly respectable, as Irene laughingly declares: so thorough a gentleman, as sighs her mother,

who has to be content to hear of his gallantry and not to share in it.

Set almost free by the companionship of Colonel Mordaunt, Irene St. John rushes about at this period far more than she desires. She is feverishly anxious to conceal from her mother the real pain that is gnawing at her heart, and poisoning every enjoyment in which she attempts to take a share: and she is madly bent on destroying for herself a remembrance that threatens to quench all that is worth calling life in her. So she makes plans, and Colonel Mordaunt backs them, until the two are constant companions. In a few days he seems to have no aim or desire except to please her; while she goes blindly on, expressing genuine surprise at each fresh token of his generosity.

One day she buys a huge bouquet, which he has to carry home, and tells him that she doats on flowers.

The next, a basket of the rarest specimens that Brussels can produce lies on her table, with her cousin's kind regards.

'What exquisite flowers!' exclaims Mrs. St. John. 'What a lot he must have paid for them!' remarks her daughter, quite indifferent as to the motive of the offering.

But the next day the offering is repeated.

'More flowers!' says Irene: 'what am I to do with them? There are no more vases, and the last are too fresh to throw away.'

On the third day, a bouquet more beautiful than either of the others lies before her.

'Oh! this is too bad!' she exclaims, vexedly. 'This is sheer waste! I shall speak to Colonel Mordaunt.'

What does the speaking result

in? An adjuration that no blossoms can be too fresh for one who is fresher herself than any blossom that ever grew in hothouse or in field, etc., etc., etc.

'Stupid old fool!' is Irene's grateful, though unexpressed rejoinder. 'The idea of taking everything I say as gospel! I declare I will never tell him I like anything again.'

Yet she is pleased by the man's attention, though she hardly knows why. It soothes the pride which has been so sorely wounded: it makes her better satisfied, not with the world, but with herself. Colonel Mordaunt is not a brilliant conversationalist nor a deep thinker: he is quite content to follow her lead, and to echo her sentiments; but though he gives her no new ideas, he does not disturb the old ones, and she is not in a mood to receive new impressions. He is thoughtful, and generous, and anxious to please. He attends her, in fact, as a servant attends his mistress, a subject his queen: and all women, however broken-hearted they may be, dearly love to keep a retinue of slaves. Irene likes it: she is a woman born to govern, who takes submission to her as a right. It never strikes her that slaves may dare to adore.

Mrs. St. John receives Colonel Mordaunt's attentions to her daughter and herself with very different feelings. She is more than gratified by them—she is flattered. And if she can secure his undivided attention for an hour or two, she makes the most of it by thanks and confidences. One day Irene is lying down upon her bed with a headache, as she says—with a headache, as she might more correctly have expressed it—and Mrs. St. John has

the Colonel to herself. It is a warm afternoon, and the heat and the agitation of the interview have brought a roseate hue into the old lady's face which makes her look quite handsome.

'Colonel Mordaunt—Philip—is I may still call you so—I have a great anxiety upon my mind.'

'A great anxiety, my dear Mrs. St. John! if it is anything in which I can assist you —'

'I was sure you would say so! Yes; I think you can help me, or, at all events, it will be a comfort to consult you on the matter. I have so few friends in whom I can confide.'

'Let me know what distresses you at once.'

'It is about money. Oh! what a hateful subject it is. I believe money, either the want of it or the excess of it, to be at the bottom of almost every trouble in this world; and, though poor dear Tom left me very comfortably off, yet —'

'You are in want of it? My dear friend, every penny I have is at your disposal!'

'How like you to say so! No; that would not help me. The fact is I have been spending more than my income since my husband's death—intrenching largely on my principal—much more largely than I had any idea of till I received my banker's book a few weeks back.'

'But I thought my cousin left you so well off.'

'Not nearly so well as the world imagines. He had indulged in several private speculations of late, and the loss of them preyed on his mind—sometimes I think it hastened his death; I know that at the last he was greatly troubled to think he could not leave us in better circumstances.'

'But, my dear Mrs. St. John, excuse my saying so—considering

it was the case, how could you be so foolish as to touch your principal, the only thing you and your daughter had to depend on ?'

'Ah! it was foolish, wasn't it? but don't reproach me; you can't think how bitterly I am repenting of it now.'

She lies back in her chair, quite overcome by the idea, whilst Colonel Mordaunt sits by her side, silent and absorbed.

Suddenly Mrs. St. John starts up and clutches his hand.

'Philip! Philip! I am dying; and my girl will be left all but penniless.'

'Good God! it cannot be as bad as that! You must be mistaken, Mrs. St. John! You are weak and ill, and matters look worse to you than they really are. Put the management of your affairs into my hands, and I will see that they are set right again.'

'It is beyond your power. You cannot think how mad I have been. When Tom died, and I found it would be impossible for us to live in the style to which we had been accustomed, I thought it would be better to give Irene a season or two in town—to let her be seen, in fact. She is so pretty she ought to have made a good marriage; and I never thought the money could run away so fast until I found it was nearly all gone.'

'But who are your trustees? What have they been about to permit you to draw upon your principal in this manner?'

'There are no trustees. I am sole legatee and executrix. The money was left absolutely to me. I wish now it had not been so.'

'And—and—Irene,' says Colonel Mordaunt, presently, 'She is not then in a position to make the good match you speak of?'

'Ah! there's my worst trouble, Philip! I was so sure she was

going to be married—such an excellent connection, too. I looked upon the matter as settled, and then it came to nothing.'

Colonel Mordaunt's brow lowers, and he commences to play with the ornaments on the table.

'And who may the gentleman have been?'

'Well, I mustn't tell you, for my child's sake, for he behaved in the most dishonourable manner to her, Philip; dangled after her all the season, meeting her everywhere, and paying her the most undisguised attention, and then, when I felt bound to ask him what he intended by it all, turned round and said he had never considered her as anything more than a friend.'

'The scoundrel!' cries Colonel Mordaunt, jumping up from his chair and pacing the room, 'the unmitigated scoundrel! Mrs. St. John, let me have his name and bring him to book, as he deserves.'

'Ah! not for worlds. Irene would never forgive me! You cannot think how angry she was even at my asking him the question.'

'And I suppose she—she—felt the business very much?'

'I cannot tell you. She assured me at the time that she was utterly indifferent to him; but I have had my suspicions since. Any way, it has broken my heart! To hear my child refused in marriage by a man who had caused her name to be so openly connected with his own that it was quite unlikely any one else would come forward, and when I had been risking her dependence in order to further her prospects in life. I shall never recover it, Philip; that blow has been the death of me.'

'Why should you say so? You are not really ill.'

'I am sinking fast, my dear

friend; I am growing weaker every day; and very soon I shall be gone, and my Irene will have to suffer for my imprudence. Oh, Philip! for the sake of old times, promise me you will befriend my girl.'

'For the sake of both past and present,' he replies, warmly, 'trust to me. I will do everything in my power to assist her. I am rich, as doubtless you know; the income which poor Tom and I equally inherited from our mothers has, in my case, never been fully used, for I have had no one to spend it on, and so long as I have a pound Irene shall never want one.'

'Generous as of old. Ah, Philip! if I had only known what you were; if I had only had the sense ——'

'My dear lady, what is the use of reverting to the past? You acted as you thought right. It has all been for the best.'

'For the best that I should have deceived one of the noblest and most honourable of men?'

'Hush, hush! not deceived; you must not call it by so harsh a term,' replies the Colonel, with the ready forgiveness which we find it so easy to accord to an injury for which we have long ceased to grieve; 'you are too hard upon yourself. Remember how young you were.'

'I should have been old enough to recognise your worth,' replies the poor lady, who, like many of her fellow-creatures, has committed a great error on setting out in life, and never discovered her mistake until it was past remedy; 'but it is something to know that I leave you Irene's friend.'

'You may rest on that assurance with the greatest confidence,' he replies, soothingly, and tells himself that the past, when the poor faded wreck of a woman

who lies before him took back the hand she had promised to himself to bestow it on his cousin, will indeed be amply atoned for if he can only claim the friendship of the bright creature who has sprung from the union which went far to make his life a solitary one.

He really believes that he shall be satisfied with her friendship. So we deceive ourselves.

Mrs. St. John's conversation appears to be almost prophetic; at least, the state of mind which induced it naturally predisposes her to succumb to illness; and when, a few days after, she is seized with a low fever that is decimating the city, her weakness greatly aggravates the danger.

A foreign doctor is called in; he immediately proposes to bleed the patient; Irene flies in her distress to Colonel Mordaunt.

'He will kill my mother; what can I do to prevent it? Pray help me.'

She is so lovely in her distress, with all thought of self vanished, and the tears standing in her great grey eyes, that it is as much as he can do to answer her appeal rationally.

'Be calm; I will not allow this Belgian rascal to touch her. I have already telegraphed to London. Mr. Pettingall will be here to-morrow.'

'How can I ever thank you sufficiently?'

Mr. Pettingall arrives to time, and remains as long as his professional duties will permit, but he can do nothing. Mrs. St. John becomes unconscious, and sinks rapidly. It takes but a few days to accomplish that in her which a robust body would have been fighting against for weeks. In a very short time Irene is awakened to a sense of her mother's danger,

and in a very short time after that the danger is past—the illness is past—everything is past, indeed, except the cold, still figure lying on the bed where she had watched life fade out of it, and which will be the last thing of all (save the memory of a most indulgent mother) to pass away for ever.

Mr. Pettingall has returned to London by this time, and Irene and Colonel Mordaunt are alone. What would she have done without him?

Mrs. St. John has left no near relatives who would care to incur the expense of attending her funeral or personally consoling her orphaned daughter; two or three of them receive letters with an intimation of the event, to which they reply (after having made more than one copy of their answer) in stereotyped terms, interlarded with texts of Scripture and the places where they may be found and 'made a note of.' But not one pair of arms is held out across the British Channel (metaphorically speaking) to enfold Irene; not one pair of eyes weep with her; pens go and tongues wag, yet the girl remains, save for the knowledge of Colonel Mordaunt's help and presence, alone in her sorrow.

During the remainder of that sad week she sits almost entirely in her mother's room; confident, though he has not told her so, that everything that should be done is being done by the man who has expressed himself so kindly towards her; and when, on the day of the funeral, she meets him again, she feels as though he were her only friend.

When the interment is over and they have returned to the hotel, Colonel Mordaunt remarks how pale and worn the girl has become, and ventures to ask what care she has been taking of her own health.

'My health! oh, what does that signify?' says Irene, as the tears well up freshly to her swollen eyelids. 'There is nothing left for me to live for now.'

She has borne up bravely until to-day, for she is no weak creature to render herself sodden by tears that cannot undo the past; she is a woman made for action rather than regret; but the hardest moment in life for self-control is that in which we return to an emptied home, having left all that remains of what we loved beneath the ground. The voice that made our hearts rejoice was silent; the loving eyes beamed on us no longer; the warm, firm hand was cold and claspless; yet, we could see and touch them. God only knows what joy and strength there comes from contact—and how hard faith is without sight. We look on what we love, and though we have had evidence of its estrangement, still delude ourselves with the sweet falsehood that it is as it ever was: we lose sight of it, and though it be strong as death and faithful as the grave, cold doubts will rise betwixt it and ourselves to torture us until we meet again.

It is well the dead are buried out of sight; else would they never be forgotten. Human love cannot live for ever, unless it sees and touches. So Irene feels for the first time that she has really lost her mother.

But Colonel Mordaunt has lived longer in this world than she has, and his 'all' still stands before him, more engaging than ever, in her deep mourning and distress.

'You must not say so,' he answers, gently. 'You must let me take care of you now; it was a promise made to your poor mother.'

'Ah! Mother, mother!'

'My dear girl, I feel for you

more than I can express, but I entreat you not to give way. Think how distressed she would be to see you neglecting the health she was always so anxious to preserve. I hear that you have made no regular meals for a week past. This must continue no longer; you must permit me to alter it.'

'I will permit you to do anything that you think right, Colonel Mordaunt. I have no fri^rd left but yourself.'

'Then I shall order dinner to be served for us in your sitting-room, and expect you to do the honours of the table.'

'Since you wish it, I will try to do so.'

'I do wish it, my dear cousin, for more reasons than one. Mr. Walmsley, your mother's solicitor, will be here to-morrow; and it is quite necessary that I should have a little conversation with you before you meet him.'

'When the dinner is ready I shall be there.'

And in another hour Colonel Mordaunt and Irene St. John are seated opposite to one another at table. Her eyes are still red, her cheeks pale, and she neither eats nor talks much; but she is quiet and composed, and listens to all her cousin has to say with interest and attention. He does not broach the subject of money, however, until the dinner has been cleared away again, and they are safe from the waiters' supervision.

Then Irene draws her chair nearer to the open stove, for November has set in bright and cold; and Colonel Mordaunt, still playing with his fruit and wine, commences the unwelcome topic.

'I have something to say to you, my dear Irene, less pleasant than important; but money considerations are generally so. Have you any idea of the amount of your mother's income?'

'My mother's income? Not the least. But it was a large one, was it not? We always lived so well in London.'

'Too well, I am afraid, my dear. Women are sadly ignorant about the management of money.'

'Yes; I am sure I am,' she replies, indifferently. 'In fact, it never entered my head to make any inquiries on the subject. We had a house in Brook Street, you know, and our own carriage, and everything we could desire. I never remember poor mamma refusing me money in my life, or expressing the slightest anxiety on the subject.'

'It would have been better if she had done so, my dear. I had a long talk with her about her affairs a week or two before her death; and she was anxious that I should look into and arrange them for her. Your father did not leave so much behind him as the world thinks; and your poor mother was improvident of the little she received. I am afraid, from what she told me, that a large portion of her principal was sunk during those two seasons in town.'

'Was it? Well, it will signify little now. Whatever remains, there is sure to be enough for me.'

'My dear child, I am not so sure of that. You have been brought up in every luxury; you have never known, as you said just now, what it is to be denied.'

'I can learn it. Others have done the same before me.'

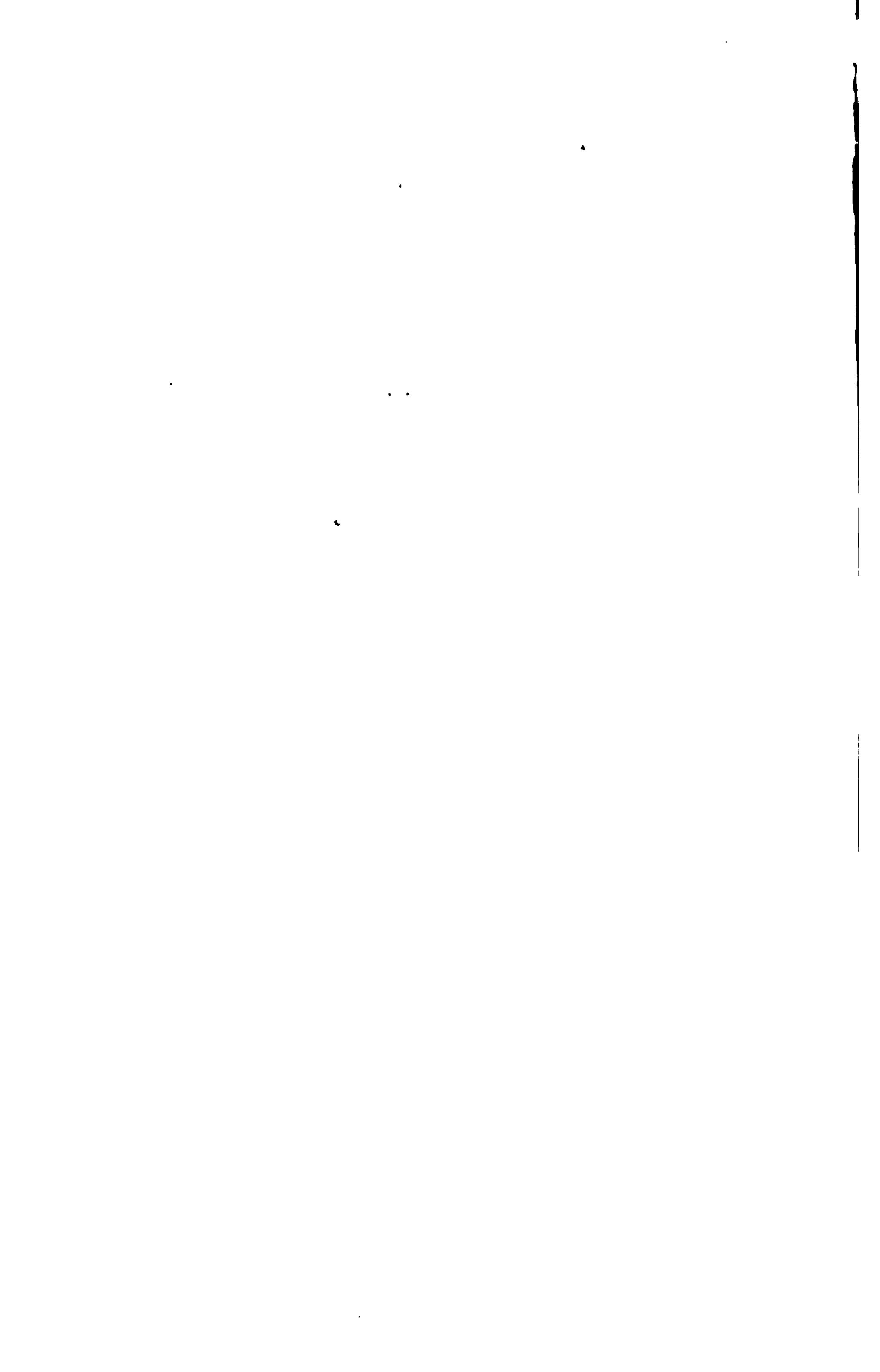
'But supposing the very worst—that you have actually not enough to live on. What then?'

'That is scarcely probable, is it? But if so, I can work.'

'Work, child! You work to earn your living? No, no; it would never come to that; you are far too beautiful. You must marry first.'

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'What! marry for a home? Colonel Mordaunt, you do not know me, if you think me capable of doing such a thing.'

'Why not? Hundreds of women do it.'

'Hundreds of women sell themselves, you mean. Well, I am not for sale.'

'You call it by too harsh a term, Irene. I did not intend that you should marry *any one* in order to obtain means of support; but that, if an eligible offer should present itself from some man whom you could respect, even if he does not exactly come up to the standard you may have erected in your imagination—'

She interrupts him quickly.

'What standard? What are you talking of?—what do you mean?'

'I was only talking generally, my dear. Young ladies always have an ideal.'

'I am not a young lady, then; I have none.'

'You have never yet known, perhaps, what it is to be what is called "in love,"' he continues, searchingly.

She colours, and looks annoyed.

'Colonel Mordaunt, I thought you too old and wise to care to discuss such nonsense. Any way, I do not care to discuss it with you, especially to-day. Let me leave you for the present, and when Mr. Walmsley arrives, you will send and let me know.'

She is going then, but he stops her.

'Don't be offended with me, my dear Irene.'

'Offended? Oh, no!' returning to place her hands in his. 'How could I be, after all your great kindness to me and—to her? I look upon you as a father, indeed I do, and could not feel offended at anything which you might please to say to me.'

As she leaves him he sighs.

There is some little delay in the solicitor's appearance, during which time Colonel Mordaunt's attentions to his young cousin are as deferential as they are devoted. Then comes Mr. Walmsley and his bundle of papers, by which his worst fears for Irene's income are realised; for when the various debts are disposed of and the accounts made up, three or four thousand pounds is all the balance left in the banker's hands.

'You cannot live on it; it will be sheer beggary,' says Colonel Mordaunt, as he discloses the fact to her.

'It will do very well. Many have less,' is the indifferent answer.

'Irene! you do not know what you are taking about. You have always been clothed and fed and tended like a gentlewoman; and the interest of this money will barely suffice to provide you with the necessaries of life. It is madness to imagine that you will be able to live upon it.'

'But what am I to do, then?' she says, innocently, as she lays her hand upon his arm, and looks up into his face. 'If I have no more, it must be enough. No arguments can double it.'

'What are you to do? Oh, Irene! if I might tell you—if I only dared to tell you the means by which, if you so will it, you may be placed at once in the position which befits your birth and station, and far above the paltry necessity of ever again considering how you are to do anything which money can do for you.'

'Colonel Mordaunt!' she cries, shrinking from him.

She does not profess to misunderstand his meaning, for it is glowing in his eyes, and trembling in his accents, and lighting up his handsome, middle-aged face, until

it looks ten years younger than it did before; and Irene is too true a woman to stoop to flatter her own vanity by playing on his feelings. There are many of her sex who pretend they cannot tell when a man is in love with them. They are either fools or hypocrites. Irene is neither. She sees too plainly, though for the first time, that the affection Colonel Mordaunt bears for her is not all cousinly, and her natural impulse is to shrink away. He perceives the action, and it goads him on.

'You shrink from me; you think, because I am old enough to be your father, that therefore I am too old to love you. Irene! no boy that you have ever met has it in his power to conceive so deep a passion as that with which you have inspired me. I am aware that I cannot expect an answering feeling on your part—that for you I am only a middle-aged, grey-haired man; but give me the right to cherish you, and I shall have all that I desire. You are alone; let me protect you: friendless; let me take my place by your side: poor; oh, my darling! with what pride and pleasure should I pour out my riches at your feet, if you will but accept them at my hands!'

'Oh, Colonel Mordaunt! you frighten me. I never dreamt of this. Pray, let me go.'

'Not till I have told you all. Irene! I know your secret. I know that you have loved, and been disappointed.'

She reddens now—reddens like a peony—and more from anger than from shame.

'What right have you to say so? Do you want to insult me?'

'Is it a sin, then, of which I accuse you? My dear child, when you have come to my age, you will have seen so much of this world's wickedness and trouble, that a

girlish disappointment will appear a very ordinary affair to you.'

'Will it?' she answers, thoughtfully, with her eyes cast on the ground. 'And yet I feel as though no sorrow could touch me in this life again.'

'But poverty and solitude, and all the minor evils arising from them, will aggravate your trouble, and make you feel it more. Irene, you have acknowledged that I am correct. Now that I know the worst, let me renew the offer I have just made you—let me save you from yourself.'

'Oh no! you could not do it, Colonel Mordaunt. I feel your kindness—your generosity—indeed I do; but I could not marry you, even to escape worse misfortunes than those you have alluded to.'

'I am, then, odious to you?' he says, mournfully.

'On the contrary, I have an affection for you. No, do not misunderstand my meaning. I feel most kindly towards you for the sake of what you have done for my dear mother and myself—how could I do otherwise?—too kindly, indeed, to take advantage of the noble offer you have made me.'

'Leave me to judge of that, Irene. You would cancel the debt a thousand times over by the present of yourself.'

'No, it is impossible. You must not deceive yourself. Oh, Colonel Mordaunt! do not look so grieved about it. For your sake, I will tell you what I never told to any mortal yet; though, from what you say, my dear mother must have guessed the truth. I have loved, deeply, irretrievably, and in vain. This is a grief which would have well-nigh gone to break my heart, had not care for her prevented my indulging in it; and since the ne-

cessity for restraint has been withdrawn, I feel it press me down so hardly, that I have no strength left to cope with it—or myself.'

And as she finishes the confession Irene sinks down into the nearest chair, and covers her burning face with her hands. Colonel Mordaunt kneels beside her.

'My dear girl! have I not already said that this fact is no impediment? I did not expect to claim all your heart, Irene—at least, at first. Be my wife, and I will teach you to forget this sorrow.'

'Oh, never! You do not know what you are speaking of. You would come to curse the day on which I took you at your word. Dear cousin,' raising her eyes, and placing her hand upon his shoulder, 'be contented with such affection as I can give you. I love you now; in any other relation I might—hate you.'

Colonel Mordaunt rises to his feet testily.

'Then you are determined to waste your youth dreaming of a man who rejected your hand: to let all the world (himself included) see that you are wearing the willow for a fellow who is not worthy of your lightest thought; who had no consideration for you or your good name, and insulted your poor mother when she told him so?—a proper lover, indeed, for a woman like yourself to renounce the world for—a pitiful scoundrel, who is probably laughing in his sleeve at the mortification he has caused you.'

He has stung her hardly there; and he meant so to sting her. She stands up and confronts him, tearless and majestic.

'I don't know why you should so wound me. I don't know what I have done to deserve it, unless it is the fit reward for my folly in confiding in you. I wish I had

bitten out my tongue before I had told you anything; but, if you are a gentleman, do not make me more angry than I am, by alluding to it again.'

'Oh, Irene! forgive me; it was the strength of my love that induced me to be cruel. Only give me hope—say that at some future time, when you have somewhat recovered this disappointment, perhaps, you will think of what I have told you, and I will try to be contented.'

'It would be madness to give hope where there is none. Besides, such affairs as these, it is indelicate to discuss them so soon after my mother's death.'

'She would not say so. She died happy in the belief that I should befriend you. Say that, by-and-by—in a few months' time—I may ask you again.'

'If you do, my answer can only be the same; I have no heart left to give any one, Colonel Mordaunt.'

'Never mind the heart! Give me yourself. Irene, say that I may ask you again, in a month's time.'

'A month? oh no! A month can make no difference.'

'In three months, then. It is a longer period than you anticipate. Give me my answer three months hence.'

'Oh, why will you torture me so! I shall never change my mind!'

'Child, I know better! I know that at least there is a chance; and I cannot afford to throw the smallest chance away. I will speak to you again in three months.'

'No—not in three; in six. If I must repeat what I have said to-day, I will repeat it after six months' deliberation. Then you will know that I am in earnest.'

'You shall be in earnest before

the time arrives. Irene! I am another man; you have given me 'hope!'

'A very slight one.'

'It is enough to cling to. Ah, my darling! you must not think, because I am older than yourself, that I shall worry or fidget you. I am younger in heart than in years, Irene; and love for you has made me feel a boy again. Only be mine, and I will devote my life to making yours happy. And now let us talk of yourself. You have refused to come to Fen Court: what do you intend to do?'

There had been a proposal, after Mrs. St. John's death, that Irene should go and stay at Colonel Mordaunt's house, Fen Court, which is presided over by his sister, Miss Isabella Mordaunt; and the girl, before she guessed at the nature of her cousin's affection for her, had half agreed to do so; but now she shrinks from the idea as a lamb might shrink from going to picnic in a lion's den; and it has become necessary to think of some other residence for her.

'I shall accept the offer of my aunt, Mrs. Cavendish, to go and stay a few weeks at Norwood. Perhaps I may make some arrangement about living with her. I have thought of nothing yet.'

'But why choose Mrs. Cavendish, with her heap of children, in that dull suburban house? It is so unlike what you have been accustomed to; you will be bored out of your life. I should have thought your other aunt, Mrs. Campbell, with that nice little place in Clarges Street, would have been a far more suitable chaperon for you.'

'Chaperon! what do I want with a chaperon? Do you suppose I am going to run about to theatres and parties before I have

changed my first mourning? Besides, I hate London. I shall not mind the dulness of Norwood; it will be in accordance with my feelings.'

'Ah, my dear; you're very young. Ten more years in this world will teach you to try all you can to disperse a grief, instead of sitting down to nurse it. But I suppose you must have your own way—at least, for six months,' with a sly glance that has no power to make Irene smile. 'When will you start?'

'As soon as possible. I want to get out of this miserable city as quickly as I can. Can we go to-morrow?'

'Well—with a little energy, I daresay we can. But you are not fit for much exertion. I must pack your things for you.'

'Oh no! I could not let you do so. Besides, you have your own.'

'I shall do my own, and yours too. If you persist in refusing, the only thing is—we can't go.'

'But I thought you had a particular engagement this afternoon with your old friend Comte de Marigny?'

'My old friend must give way to my young friend.'

'How good you are to me. I do not deserve it.'

'You deserve it all, and far more, if I could give it. But it is not all disinterestedness, you know, Irene. I want a heavy price for my devotion.'

She colours, sighs, and turns away. In another couple of days she is installed as temporary inmate of her aunt's house at Norwood.

How am I to describe Fen Court, in Leicestershire? And yet I must try to bring the place, which will be the scene of so many of the events in this history,

clearly before the mind's eye of my reader. The house itself, which stands in the village of Priestley, about ten miles from one of the principal county towns, is neither old nor modern; but may have been built in the early part of the present century. It is a substantial white manor, not picturesque or romantic looking, but eminently comfortable—at least, from the outside. It has a bold porch, and large windows, some of which open to the ground: a conservatory on one side, leading to a billiard-room, and a library upon the other. It is fronted by a thick shrubbery, a noble grass-plot, above which droop cedar trees, and a broad drive, kept hard as iron. To the left are the stables and the kennel, planted out by shrubs, but close at hand; the right leads, by a dark, winding path, to the back of the house, where a fine lawn, surrounded by flower-beds, slopes down towards a lake with an artificial island on it, which is reached by a rustic bridge; beyond which lie the farm buildings, and their ungainly accessories.

So far, Fen Court appears to be all that could be desired; and had been purchased eagerly by Colonel Mordaunt on his coming into his money, resigning the service, and settling at home.

But the inside of the Court has one great fault—it is, notwithstanding the sums which have been spent on its equipment, irredeemably ugly and dull. The house contains every comfort, having a long, well-stocked library, a vast dining-room, cheerful breakfast-parlour, and marvellously-furnished drawing-room. When I say marvellously, I do not mean in marvellous good taste. Colonel Mordaunt has never indulged in personal hobbies (except in the stables and hunt-

ing-field). There are pictures on the walls of Fen Court, but he seldom looks at them, and hardly knows their painters' names. He ridicules the idea of any one caring for old china and glass; has never heard of brio-à-brac; and calls a love for worm-eaten oak or ebony sheer folly. Give him a well-built house, free from draughts and smoky chimneys; let Druce or Maple furnish it according to his own taste, and the best of his ability, and he could wish for nothing more.

And up to a certain point Colonel Mordaunt is right. Home-comforts—good beds and lots of blankets, spotless table-linen, and very hot plates—are worth all the Venetian glass and marqueterie in the world, if we cannot combine the two. But he never tries, and never has tried to combine them; and his sister Isabella takes no more trouble than he does. The stables of Fen Court are perfect in all their fittings and arrangements; so are the kennels; so are the sleeping, and eating, and sitting apartments of the human part of the establishment; only men and women (some men and women, that is to say) occasionally feel the want of more than bodily comfort.

Yet no one in Fen Court seems to miss sweet sounds, and all the pretty graceful nothings that throw a nameless charm on the apartments presided over by a woman of taste.

Miss Mordaunt is decidedly not a woman of taste. She is only a poor weak-spirited dependent on her brother's will and pleasure, and the tyranny of Mrs. Quekett, the housekeeper. Mrs. Quekett is an awful woman; it is she that clothes those unhappy chairs and sofas in the drawing-room in brown-holland covers, so that no one has ever seen their blue satin

glories exposed to daylight, and drapes the chandliers in gauzy petticoats, like gold-beaters' skin, and pins yellow muslin round the picture-frames, until the room looks like the back parlour of a public-house, or the state apartment set aside for the reception of new customers in a young ladies' school.

It is Rebecca Quekett who decides how much butter shall be consumed per week at the Court breakfast table, and how much cream in the coffee after dinner; which servants shall be retained, and which discharged; which bed-rooms shall be used, and which left tenantless; and it is to Rebecca Quekett, and not to Miss Mordaunt, that every one refers for everything that may be required for the household, from a clean duster up to a new Brussels carpet.

Colonel Mordaunt even, paramount amongst his dogs and horses and hunting friends, is nothing inside Fen Court; and his sister is less than nothing—she is but an instrument in the hands of the most despotic of mistresses. For what tyranny can exceed the tyranny of an over-fed and indulged menial; of the inferior who, for some reason best known to ourselves, we have permitted to climb above us; of the servant who, being master of our family secrets, we seem in greater than bodily fear, lest he or she should take advantage of the situation, by wielding illegal influence above our unhappy heads with a satisfaction that knows no remorse?

But let Mrs. Quekett speak for herself.

It is January. Colonel Mordaunt has been home from his continental trip for more than two months, and the hunting-season still engrosses most of his

time and thought—at least, to all appearances.

Ten o'clock in the morning; the breakfast, at which several gentlemen in pink have dropped in accidentally, is over; and the master of the hounds, surrounded by his pack of friends and dogs and retainers, has ridden away down the broad gravelled drive, out into the open country, and Miss Mordaunt has Fen Court to herself.

She is a woman of about five-and-forty; not ill-favoured, but with a contracted and attenuated figure, and a constant look of deprecatory fear upon her countenance, which go far to make her so. Indeed, she is worse than ill-favoured, for she is uninteresting. Some of the plainest women in the world have been the most fascinating. Miss Mordaunt fascinates no one, except with a desire to know why she should pass through life with an expression as though she were silently entreating every one she meets not to kick her. The world has not dealt harder with her than with most, but whenever she has been smitten on the right cheek, she has so pertinaciously turned the left, that her fellow-creatures have smitten her again, out of sheer vice. Every body knows what it is to wish to kick a dog who puts his tail between his legs before he has been spoken to. Humility is Christian; but, in a world of business, it doesn't 'pay.'

Miss Mordaunt being left alone, looks anxiously about the room, locks up the tea and sugar as though she were committing a theft, pulls the bell—with the faintest of tinkles at first, but afterwards, finding it is not answered, somewhat more boldly—and as the servant enters, says, apologetically—

'I think, James—as your master is gone, and the breakfast is over—I think perhaps you had better clear away.'

'Very well, miss,' replies James, with stolid indifference, as he puts the chairs back against the wall, and proceeds to business.

Miss Mordaunt glances about her, once or twice, uncertainly, and then, with a nervous grin at James, who takes no notice of the proceeding, glides from the room.

In another second she is back again.

'Is Quekett—do you know, James—in the kitchen, or the housekeeper's room?'

'I believe Mrs. Quekett is not downstairs at all yet, miss.'

'Oh, very well! it is no matter, James: it does not in the least signify. Thank you, James!' and Miss Mordaunt re-vanishes.

She does not pass into the garden or enter her own apartment: she goes straight upstairs and knocks at the door of one of the best bed-rooms.

'Come in!' says a voice that has been so used to lay down the law that it cannot speak except authoritatively; but as Miss Mordaunt appears, it attempts to modify its tone. 'Oh! is it you, miss? Pray come in. Past ten o'clock! Well, I'm sure I had no idea it was so late.'

Mrs. Quekett, clothed in a stuff dressing-gown and laced night-cap, is seated by the fire: her breakfast-tray is by her side and a footstool under her feet; nor does she make the least pretence of rising from her chair as her so-called mistress advances towards her.

The room (as I have said before) is one of the most comfortable in Fen Court, and is furnished with mahogany and French chintz and Kidderminster: so much of it belongs to Druce, or Maple, but it is

further decorated in a fashion of which those gentlemen have been quite guiltless; for pictures hang about the walls; carved oaken brackets, holding statuettes in china, fill up the recesses; and a French clock and candelabra adorn the mantelpiece. Presents from her numerous employers—slight testimonies of her worth from the Duchess of B——, and my Lady C——: so Mrs. Quekett is wont to describe these ornaments: spoils from the various battle-fields through which she has fought her way in life—so an unprejudiced observer would say. And on either side the mirror are displayed photographs in frames: young men and maidens; old men and children: 'Dear Lord X——, and the Hon. Richard A——, and Lady Viola.' To set Mrs. Quekett off on the subject of her photographs, is to hear her talk 'Court Circular' for at least an hour, and finish with the intelligence that, with the exception of his poor dear father, she has never 'been-meaned' herself by living in an untitled family before Colonel Mordaunt's.

Miss Mordaunt addresses her timidly:

'How are you this morning, Quekett?—is your head better?'

'Well, miss, I can hardly say before I get up and move about a bit. It's very cold—isn't it?'

'Bitterly cold; the wind is due north.'

'Ah! I thought so. I don't think I shall be down just yet. Will you give the cook directions about the luncheon, Miss Mordaunt?—I shall be in time to see to the dinner.'

'But the tradesmen will want their orders, Quekett.'

'Well, the cook can come up to me for that. I suppose the Colonel won't be home to luncheon.'

'I don't know—I can't say. I

didn't ask him—but perhaps—I should think——'

'Oh, it's no good thinking, miss. If he hasn't left directions, he must put up with the inconvenience. Were there any gentlemen to breakfast this morning?'

'Well, Quekett, there were one or two—three or four, perhaps; but no one could help it—at least, I'm sure Philip didn't ask them; for Mr. Rogers rode up just as we sat down, and——'

'It could be helped well enough, if the Colonel had a grain of sense. A pack of fellows to eat him out of house and home, and nothing to show for it. I warrant they've cut my new ham down to the bone. And which of 'em would give the Colonel a breakfast before he sets out hunting, I should like to know.'

'Oh, Quekett! Philip does dine with them sometimes: it was only last week he received invitations from the Capels and the Stewarts.'

'And what's the good of that? Gives everything, and takes nothing in return. And, by-the-way, is it true, miss, that there's talk about Master Oliver spending his Easter here again?'

'I'm sure I don't know. You had better ask Philip, Quekett. I have nothing to do with Master Oliver. I daresay it's a mistake. Who told you about it?'

'That don't in the least signify; but things can't go on like this, and so I shall tell the Colonel. There are some people I can't live in the same house with, and Master Oliver's one. And it won't be the better for him, I expect, if I have to leave through his means.'

Miss Mordaunt is trembling all over.

'Oh, Quekett! it will never come to that. You know how anxious Philip is to make you comfortable, or to do anything to please you, that—that—is reasonable.'

'Reasonable, Miss Mordaunt! Well, I'm not likely to ask anything as is not reasonable. I was fifteen years in the service of the Colonel's father, and I came to Fen Court, as every one knows, much against my own interests, and only to please those as had a sort of claim on me. And then to be told that Mr. Philip will do anything to please me as is reasonable, is rather too much to put up with.' And here Mrs. Quekett shows symptoms of boiling.

'Oh, pray don't say that, Quekett! I daresay my brother never thought of having Master Oliver here; and, if he did, that he will put off his visit to a more convenient opportunity.'

'Well, I hope so, I'm sure; for I've no wish to see him hanging about here for a month. And I think, miss, that if this is all you have to say to me, perhaps I'd better be getting up and looking after the house matters myself; for I don't suppose there'll be a bit left in the larder, now that the Colonel has been feeding a pack of wolves at breakfast.'

Miss Mordaunt, making no pretence of resentment, flies as though she had been ordered to disappear.

At noon, Mrs. Quekett descends to the housekeeper's room, which—by means of furniture cribbed from other apartments, hot luncheons and suppers, and friends to partake of them whenever she feels disposed to issue her invitations—is as comfortable and convivial a retreat as any to be found in Fen Court. Mrs. Quekett, too, presents an appearance quite in accordance with the presiding deity of a servants' feast. Tall, well-formed, and well-dressed, with a face that has been handsome and a complexion that is not entirely guiltless of aid, she looks fitted to hold a high position among menials—and she

holds it, a trifle too highly. Her dominant, overbearing temper makes her at once feared and hated in the servants' hall, and each domestic is ready to abuse her behind her back and to rake up old dead scandals, which might well be permitted to lie forgotten amongst the ashes of the past. As she enters her sanctum, a dish of stewed kidneys and a glass of stout are placed before her, with

punctuality; but it is well, as she came down-stairs, that she did not hear the cook ordering the kitchen-maid to take in the 'cats' meat' without delay. Somebody else in the kitchen hears the remark, however, and laughs—not loudly but discordantly—and the harsh sound reaches the housekeeper's ears.

'Who's that?' she demands, sharply, 'Mrs. Cray? Tell her she is to come here and speak to me.'

(*To be continued.*)

JE VOUS AIME.

I WILL not say you're fairer far
Than angels that in heaven are ;
I will not falsely flatter you,
But I will tell you what is true—
 Je vous aime,
Mon amie chérie, je vous aime.

I knew you for a little while—
I heard your voice, I saw you smile ;
And as you moved among the throng,
I looked, and learnt this two line-song—
 Je vous aime,
Mon amie chérie, je vous aime.

The night died out, the morning came,
The big sun set the sea afame :
We walked together, I and you,
And cool waves whispered to the blue—
 Je vous aime,
Mon amie chérie, je vous aime.

Dim evening faded into night,
The yellow moon turned small and white,
And, floating o'er the trees, the chime
Of curfew bells breathed out the rhyme—
 Je vous aime,
Mon amie chérie, je vous aime.

When sails the ship that brings me home
To friends, and fields we used to roam,
Will it be well for me to sing
This posy of a lover's ring—
 Je vous aime,
Mon amie chérie, je vous aime.

GUY ROSLYN.

A PERFECT LOVE.

BURY it gently—let the old love lie,
 Bright with the radiance of its former glory,
 Dear with the memory of the oft-told story,
 That cannot die.

We had the sweet young love so pure, so fair,
 It turned the sea into a field of gold,
 And wrapped the whole earth in a summer fold,
 Without a care.

Then winter came, and it gave many a sigh,
 While storms of bitter sorrow o'er us swept ;
 We felt it perish slowly, as we wept—
 I saw it die.

I clasped it close, and cried to it to stay,
 In agony implored it still to live :
 Once and again I prayed it to forgive—
 It turned away.

Cover it up, the poor imperfect thing ;
 Let not the cold world looking on its face,
 See that with youth and joy, its power and grace
 Have taken wing.

Poor heart ! that found its treasure was but dross ;
 Yet mercy comes when clouds of woe are dense.
 I looked to God, and cried for recompense—
 He showed His cross.

He knew our joy was poison, so above
 He took it, with the wisdom that knows best,
 To keep it for us in the realms of rest ;
 A perfect love.

M. J.

DIAMOND CHIPS.

BY 'SARCELLE,' AUTHOR OF 'THE DIAMOND DIGGINGS OF SOUTH AFRICA,' ETC., ETC.

BUT few months have passed away since I was one of the crowd of diamond-diggers in the neighbourhood of Du Toit's Pan, then Orange Free State, a little later West Griqualand (British), and now again disputed territory—a sort of No Man's Land. A batch of diamond-field newspapers is now before me, and while lingering over the pleasant reminiscences thereby called up of familiar places, scenes, and people, of pick, shovel, and sieve, of stifling dust and scorching heat, of white tents glistening in a flood of African sunshine, of diggers and niggers, oxen and mules, springboks and blesboks, *et hoc genus omne*, I have thought I could cull here and there a characteristic advertisement or paragraph which might afford matter for mirth to home-staying Englishmen, and at the same time give them some insight into little peculiarities of life at the diggings. Dear old 'Diamond News' and 'Diamond Field!' which I have so often eagerly purchased, as the newsman, with loud tinkling bell, came around among the hot, thirsty, dusty crowd, that surrounded our favourite auctioneers on Saturday afternoons—truly your paper is yellowish and your ink tinged with brown, I know the sun was hot, and the camp feverish when you were put into the rough little wooden post office!

The first amusing paragraph that meets my eye is not suggestive of that increased efficiency of police regulations and preservation of order which loyal 'Britishers' so confidently looked forward to as the result of annexation.

'There are now so many black sheep

under the protection of the authorities, that room cannot be found for all of them in the jail, and some have to sleep outside in the prison yard, guarded by police.'

Query, are the 'black sheep' all niggers? White inmates of the jail used to be very scarce, I am happy to say. If the government, as by last advices seemed likely, has really placed 'off-coloured' persons on an equality with whites, and allows them equal facilities for digging and selling diamonds, any experienced digger or colonist will say that if that salutary feeling of utter inferiority to, and dread of, the white man, which alone can act as a check on the perverse propensities of the niggers, be removed, offences against person and property will soon become lamentably numerous. If any of the *al fresco* culprits were white men, they had reason to congratulate themselves that the jail was 'full inside,' for, in truth, I often thought it would be sufficient punishment for any trivial offence to spend a night on the foul straw of the miserable little 'tronk' or 'chokey,' as our little prison was expressively termed, in company with a score drunken specimens of Kafir and Hottentot natural history, whose 'natural perfumery' would be aggravated to an intolerable degree by the heat and closeness of the atmosphere. Well, Christmas comes but once a year, and I expect Christmas had something to do with the abnormal repletion of 'chokey,' for a little farther down I find the following:—

'The finds durings the week have been rather quiet, but this, I think, is owing to the Christmas holidays interfering with

the usual routine of work. I expect we shall hear and see more of headaches than diamonds for the next few days, at least to judge by appearances. As a matter of course, hotel-keepers are doing a "slogging trade," and wish Christmas to last "all the year round." Champagne is flowing like water in some quarters, and another scarcity of this now commonplace article is predicted, but I think this is only a "ruse" to raise the price.'

I remember that the atmosphere on the Fields was often very clear indeed, but I cannot call to mind that it was ever quite clear enough to enable me to see a headache, and I know there were often plenty of them going about.

I am happy to see that the diggers were able to indulge in a little dessert after their Christmas dinners.

'The first fruit of the season arrived here on Saturday last from the Transvaal. It consisted of a few bags of apples and pears, and the former, about the size of large marbles, were eagerly caught up at eight shillings per hundred. Small cucumbers also found a ready sale at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. each. In the course of a few weeks, however, we may expect a plentiful supply of apples, pears, water and rock melons, grapes, vegetables, &c., from the same source.'

Any one who has ever been choked with the dust, and parched with the thirst of the 'dry diggings,' will easily understand how greedily these healthful and refreshing luxuries will be bought up by the hard-working seekers after 'sparklers.'

The next is evidently cut out of a Yankee paper, but as I have not seen it quoted in England, I give it here, hoping that though it is not really a 'diamond chip,' its exquisite humour may be its apology.

'Another poor girl has died in Virginia from the use of tobacco, at the age of one hundred. She was an orphan.'

Looking over the advertisements I am attracted by a startling acrostic, and at first sight I am lost in amazement at finding

poetic talent in such an out-of-the-way place as the little digging camp at Hebron, but on a closer inspection I find it is not poetry, and I do not imagine it can be so very difficult to write acrostics *in prose*. What a pity St. Valentine's day has passed! I might have tried one myself—though I hardly imagine it would be so effective on the feminine susceptibilities as a combination of lace paper, flowers, cupids, and humming birds.

However, I will now let Mr. Hale speak for himself, which he seems quite capable of doing:

'Hale's Masonic is the only Hotel in
Hebron,
All Invalids from De Beer's rapidly re-
cover there,
Leaving him with the utmost reluctance;
Every one receives a hearty welcome,
Some can't make up their minds to leave
at all.'

Many declare it the most "Unique Hos-
telrie" on the Fields,
And are themselves a living evidence of
benefits derivable there;
Some People say the accommodation
isn't ample,
Of which one visit there proves the
error;
No one can deny the purity of the
atmosphere,
I am open, as Artemus Ward says, to
"Bet on it,"
Can any one say fairer than that?

Hales's Masonic, like good wine, re-
quires "No Bush,"
On that point all may rely,
The best of it is terms are very reasonable.
Every one who visits it express them-
selves pleased,
Let no one delay from making a call.'

Friend Hale, thy eloquence ex-
ceeds thy grammar. But no mat-
ter! Diggers will be quite willing
to dispense with grammar, and
even to allow the letter H to be
dropped all over the place in
their presence, if they can only
get those luxuries which I believe
are procurable at Hebron, viz.,
fresh vegetables, milk, and, above
all, clean water.

Here is a somewhat characteristic advertisement of a well-known Klip Drift house :—

'THE CHEAPSIDE LONDON CASH ESTABLISHMENT.

BACK AND RAPHAEL.

Have always on hand a large assortment of

MERCHANDIZE AND FANCY GOODS.

Which are offered at

LOW PRICES.

N.B. All kinds of Produce, Diamonds, Wool, Skins, Feathers, and Curiosities, bought for Cash or Barter.'

Not much like anything in 'Cheapside, London,' is the store in question, a big, low building of corrugated iron, overflowing with a fearfully heterogeneous abundance of general merchandise; standing on the slope of a 'diamondiferous' hill, with wooden and iron houses above and below it, a few tents in the distance, and down in the valley the big, clear stream of the Vaal, fringed with drooping willows, embanked with bright sparkling gravel, where more than half naked Kafirs are 'rocking the cradle,' and their masters, the white diggers, sitting somewhere near, perchance under a shady tree, perchance under an awning, anxiously turning over and inspecting the constantly-replenished heap on the sorting-table.

A case of petty larceny is somewhat humorously described in the following paragraph, which I take from the 'Diggers' Gazette and Commercial Advertiser':—

The Effects of Christmas.—There was a large consumption of "Fiz" and other beverages on Christmas Day. One individual, finding that the means at his command did not exactly represent in cash the amount he could conveniently absorb, quietly helped himself to the contents of the till of the Blue Posts, Colesberg Kopje. Strange to say, the proprietors objected to their Christmas-box being appropriated thusly, and the suspected party will probably have an

opportunity of discovering on New Year's Day whether her Majesty's fare is worthy of its reputation.'

Here is an editorial paragraph which is most comic in its pathos, and most pathetic in its comicality :—

'It is with great difficulty that we bring out a paper at all this week—not, as some may suspect, because we are overcome by Christmas festivities, but simply because editor, printers, and printer's devil are all more or less down with one or other of the illnesses that are perambulating these camps. A man may be perfectly well in the morning, and in the afternoon he may be floored on the broad of his back, gasping like a sick turtle, and with the countenance of a dyspeptic vulture. Proofs become a loathsome object, type is a delusion and a snare, and sleep is infinitely preferable to gadding about to purvey news for that many-headed, insatiable monster, the public. At the same time we trust the public has enjoyed its Christmas better than the fates have permitted us to enjoy ours.'

Poor editor! poor printers! and poor 'devil!' Truly I have had my share of those same illnesses—if fever, dysentery, diarrhoea, and ophthalmia are worth speaking of, and I can feel for you. And I hope you all 'pulled through'—you have got cooler weather again now, and here in London we have got it rather too cool just at present.

Here is a very mild paragraph from the 'Colesberg Advertiser,' headed 'Diamond Fields Slang':—

'Last week we noticed in one of the papers published at the Diggings a paragraph in a report of a public dinner, stating that on the toast of "The Ladies" being proposed, one of the gents (sic) present proposed "three cheers for the off-coloured ones," which was vociferously responded to. In the last "Diamond News" to hand we find the report of the discovery of the corpse of a human being, under such circumstances as lead to the conclusion that the unfortunate man had met with foul play. He is described as "an off-coloured man, a native of Cape Town." The South African diamond-diggers appear to be setting up a vocabu-

bary of their own. Anything stolen is simply "jumped." A person who commences to work, drink, eat, or to perform any of the thousand and one acts of every day life, is said to "wire in." Any thing or person of a disagreeable nature is "bogie," as a bogie mule, a bogie black fellow, &c., and any thing or person not of a fine white colour or complexion is "off-coloured." Our acquaintance with Diamond Field slang is at present rather limited, but a diligent study of the local papers will doubtless extend our education in that department.'

Really, most innocent 'Colesberg Advertiser,' your education in all departments of slang would seem to have been sadly neglected. 'Where were you raised?' oh greenest and mildest of editors, that you never heard the encouraging adjuration to 'wire in and get your name up,' with which you so kindly credit the diggers?

While on the subject of slang, I notice that one of the enterprising auctioneers of Cape Town heads his advertisement—

' DIAMONDS, DIAMONDS !!!!
Notice to the Lucky Coons.'

and in another place he advertises himself as 'The Coon to sell diamonds.' Truly a gay and festive auctioneer this, from whom we should expect much sparkle of wit and flow of eloquence.

The juxtaposition of incongruous articles in the following advertisement is amusing:—

' THE BLACK HORSE.

On sale at low rates, to close accounts.

Cape Brandy, Wine, Bottled Porter, Champagne, Plum Puddings, Strong Wire Netting, Manilla Rope, Tent Line, Blocks, Canvas, Tents, Portable Forge, Anvil, Vice, Steel Picks, and a variety of other articles.'

I have before referred to the

dropping of the letter H, which, with kindred abuses and mispronunciations, is very prevalent in the colony. I was once travelling in a waggon with twelve other passengers, only one of whom ever used an H in the right place. It was simply excruciating. Now I have actually caught two offenders misconducting themselves in this way in large type advertisements, and I will hold them up to public execration, giving the advertisements in their entirety, with names and addresses, lest I should be suspected of invention or exaggeration.

' Wanted
A GOOD COOK.
Liberal Wages will be given. Apply to
Clarance, New Rush.

AN ANDY BOY wanted also.'

This is surely some descendant of 'false, fleeting, perjured Clarence!' A man who wants *an andy boy* cannot be expected to know how to spell his own name. If Samuel Lover could only have sent him out 'Handy Andy' now, what a delightful state of confusion would poor Clarance have got into!

Here is another culprit, and a man who ought to know better—

' Wanted immediately,
A EXPERIENCED YOUNG MAN,
to make himself generally useful. Apply
to W. Kllisser, 13, Strand Street.'

Verily, this subject is too painful to be pursued further, or I could doubtless multiply instances. Well, it is possible to have too much of a good thing, so I must refrain now, lest I give British readers an overdose of 'Diamond Chips.'

THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

SPIRITUALISM—PSYCHIC FORCE—HERMANN AT THE EGYPTIAN HALL—NAPOLEON AND THE PROPHETS—THE WEATHER—OLD-FASHIONED DINNER PARTIES—BATTUES—‘VAILS’—THE ‘VISITING TAX’—‘THE COMING K—’—MR. CHARLES READE AND THE ‘SHAM-SAMPLE SWINDLE.’

IT is quite possible that the ‘Times’ was hard up for some more or less interesting subjects to pad its columns with when it admitted, and for a brief period encouraged, the correspondence on Spiritualism; but it is quite as likely, if gossip has any foundation of truth, that certain great ones had recently assisted at séances, and that the ‘manifestations’ had been of a more than ordinarily startling character; and it was deemed advisable to start the question again in the leading journal, in the expectation, it might be, that somebody or other had by this time sounded the depths—or shallows—of spiritualism, and could give to the world an accurate and authentic account of the discovery of the imposture as practised by the leading *mediums*—*media* I ought to say, perhaps. The subject was duly mooted, and the usual correspondence was inserted, and the result is that we are all exactly where we were before. Those of us who don’t believe are certainly unconverted still; those of us who do believe are more fanatical than ever; and those who suspend their judgment have seen no sufficient argument for hanging it on a higher or a lower peg in the abode of reason.

Now, however incredulous we may be as to the supernatural powers claimed by Mr. D. D. Home, Mrs. Guppy, and other gifted beings, we should be careful how we pooh-pooh the whole thing, and feel nothing but indignation against so-called spiritualists, and contempt for their victims. We

may take it that, as a matter of fact, these ‘manifestations’ really do occur in some manner or other, and that unaccountable transactions take place in the vicinity of a medium. Thus we have had an accurate narration of the phenomenon of a concertina giving forth certain musical sounds, and defying the laws of gravitation, without any apparent human and mechanical aid; we have been gravely assured that persons have, beyond all manner of doubt, been lifted into the air by no visible means, and have floated about in space with all the ease and gracefulness of a balloon, and then we are told that if we are not disposed to permit these eccentricities to be explained by the theory of spirit-power, we may account for them by believing that we are trembling on the verge of a great discovery which we are to call Psychic Force; we are to be of opinion, that is, that plain mechanical effects may be produced by an invisible and intangible power which will throw into disuse in times to come that which we were taught as children to call the principle of the lever. I have no intention of writing an essay upon spiritualism, but as the letters in the ‘Times’ have agitated the Talk of the Town to a slight extent, I think I may as well say my say, *quantum valeat*.

In the first place, then, I have been rather struck by the omission of an argument which one naturally expected to see employed by the disciples of Mr. Home or the theorists of the school of Mr. Ser-

jeant Cox, and that is the influence of the will upon the members of the body. In all mechanical contrivances some palpable power is put in operation by the application of some external force. The driver of the reposing locomotive moves a handle, and the steam, which has hitherto been hissing itself away into the atmosphere, is turned in another direction, and its compressed power acts upon the machinery which compels the wheels of the engine to revolve and proceed along the metals with such force that the train is dragged along and whirled away with increasing velocity. This we can see and comprehend. But, after all, it is nothing but the action of that immaterial thing called will that lifts the driver's hand to the substance he must touch and move before the powers of the engine can be brought into play. It is, in fact, an absolutely unknown and undiscoverable power that puts a man's legs into motion when he wishes to take a walk. This may fairly be called psychic force, and experience teaches us that it exists under all conditions of animal life. Even a jelly-fish can make its way against a strong tide, and an oyster can close its shell with extraordinary muscular power; and so Serjeant Cox may fairly argue that psychic force may, under certain conditions which remain to be discovered, have a powerful influence over substances to which it is entirely external. Thus Mr. Home's fingers may agitate the keys of the concertina, although there is no actual or visible contact between them. So, again, science explains the compass by telling us of the power of attraction, which, like gravitation, is an invisible and intangible power—some kind of psychic force again. Every child

is familiar with the phenomenon of the needle and the loadstone; why, then, should not some persons exist who possess a similar force, and who can influence substances without actually touching them?

The reply undoubtedly is that experience teaches that the will is a property of even the lowest forms of animal life, and though we can no more explain it than we can draw the shape of the intellect or soul, yet we are abundantly aware that it only exists as an exterior force so long as certain known and obvious substantial conditions are complied with. The animal dies; to all intents and purposes the will dies too: the will is powerless if the functions of life are worn out, or wholly disarranged by accident. If an animal is deprived of nourishment or oxygen gas, the will is gone. The will, then, must act through and by means of those external substances in which it was originally enshrined. Now, in the case of the concertina, we are asked to believe that Mr. Home's will acted upon the keys wholly irrespective of any external physical conditions; an unseen power emanated from him and forced the instrument to give forth certain melodies, and more, the instrument was so influenced that it too escaped from its own conditions, defied the laws of gravitation, and appeared to be suspended in the air.

To Serjeant Cox, Mr. Crookes, and the Committee of the Dialectical Society generally, we can only reply that we are much obliged to them for the trouble they have taken in this matter, but we feel bound to hesitate before we adopt even a shadow of the conclusions at which they have, no doubt reluctantly, arrived. We by no means desire to meet

them with the simple assertion that the thing cannot be ; that would be a most unphilosophic and unsatisfactory solution of the difficulty. We may willingly admit that there are more things in heaven and earth than we have dreamt of, without depriving ourselves of the right to demand evidence of a far more convincing character. If psychic force can act upon the keys of a concertina, it can equally act upon the polished handle which the engine-driver moves before the locomotive is put in motion ; or it can compel the great organ in the Albert Hall to play 'God save the Queen.' It is unreasonable to suppose that, if it indeed exists, it cannot be brought to some such plain practical test as this. Mr. Home tells us, no doubt, that the exercise of it is to a great extent involuntary on his part, but surely we may ask him to see what he can do voluntarily or involuntarily in starting the Limited Mail, or playing the first violin in the orchestra at Covent Garden.

I have purposely avoided discussing the question whether spirits are or are not concerned with the origin of the 'manifestations' we have read of in the 'Times,' and heard of in social conversation. A Purgatorial fire is not a pleasant thing to contemplate ; still it is worthy of consideration whether it is not preferable to a state in which one would be liable to be compelled to spend one's time in waiting upon prosy mediums, or in wafting Mr. Home to the ceiling, or transporting stout persons of the Guppy build across the metropolis. Really, one would be inclined to welcome annihilation, if there was no other alternative than this slavish and degraded occupation in the future life. It is the fashion in certain circles to criticise Christianity

with considerable freedom now-a-days, but, at all events, it may be admitted that the religion of the Gospels takes a higher and nobler view of the prospects of mankind than is to be found in the teachings of the so-called spiritualists.

And now one word to those who have been convinced by what they have seen of the marvels of 'spiritualism.' I would ask such people if they have ever paid any attention whatever to the feats of legerdemain ? I would entreat them to consider seriously whether Hermann at the Egyptian Hall does not perform acts in comparison with which mere table-rapping, and chair-lifting, are simply clumsy conjuring ? Those who remember the apparently extraordinary marvels worked by such artists as Houdin and Robin see nothing to be surprised at in the tricks of the spiritual lyceum. And those who have chosen to pay money in order to be initiated into the conjuror's mysteries, are only astonished at the simplicity of the hitherto most astounding performances. And it is curious how few people have the faculty of keen observation, or possess the power of eliminating details, in witnessing the startling wonders of the professional magician. How many persons in an ordinary audience can accurately relate the successive operations in the performances of tricks which depend upon a mechanical contrivance and sleight of hand ? Every conjuror is ready to tell us that his success in mystifying his audience depends to a very great extent upon his power of diverting their attention, and misleading their faculties of observation. There are certain tricks with a pack of cards which are merely the result of certain mathematical combinations, marvellous to behold, but ludicrously simple when explained.

You may tie two handkerchiefs together, with as many knots as you please, but with a 'hey, presto, part!' I can separate them in an instant. You will think this a most extraordinary and incomprehensible thing, but I do not; neither will you when I show you the simple secret. This being so, and being, further, of a strong belief that the spirits of the dead have found some better home than in a drawing-room chair or dining-room table, I prefer to state my firm conviction that 'spiritualists' are merely conjurors, and to express my regret that they have not the honesty to say so.

It is said that the late emperor of the French was claimed as a disciple by some of the bolder of the spiritualists. It is possible that the peculiar turn of his mind, his morbid desire to resemble his uncle, his supposed belief in destiny, may give some countenance to the gossip which asserted his patronage of mediums; but, however that may be, we may not be far wrong in suspecting that the mediums were not much more trustworthy than the English clergymen who dabble in prophecy and accurately discovered in Napoleon III. the Wilful King alluded to by the prophet Daniel. A pamphlet lies before me now, entitled the 'Future Career of Napoleon, of the coming re-establishment of the Napoleonic Empire, with prophetic expositions by Thirty Clergymen.' The disappointment of these reverend gentlemen must have been great indeed when Napoleon died peaceably at Chiselhurst, when they had so confidently anticipated his 'Ultimate Fall at Messiah's Advent at Armageddon.' Into the scriptural exegesis of these well-meaning but idiotic persons I have no intention of entering; I merely wish to show that if educated gentlemen

can talk such supreme nonsense as is exhibited in the pages of this sensational production, we ought, perhaps, to moderate our sense of wonder at the triumphs of spiritualism. The editor of the pamphlet actually had the audacity to write these words: 'The imperial restoration of Napoleon III. from his present retirement at Chiselhurst is absolutely certain.' It is with minds like this that the disciples of the latent religionism are constituted, and we may charitably say that they deserve our pity rather than our contempt. Such persons complain that thoughtful and scientific men treat them with supreme indifference; let them be satisfied with the reflection that our lunatic asylums are sufficiently full, and that there is, as yet, a popular desire to leave them their liberty, as we have too great a belief in the existence of common sense to think that they are likely to become injurious to society.

Mutual interrogation as to where we have been and what we have been doing this winter is of rather frequent occurrence, now that we are all meeting again at the commencement of the season. The weather has been good enough to be more than usually entertaining as a subject of conversation. We have all felt that we have really had something to say about it this time at all events; either as agriculturists or valetudinarians, or as some of those people who are perpetually writing to the 'Times' about the inches of rain that have fallen, or the queer things that have occurred in the atmosphere during the past week, we have all felt—or appeared to have felt—a more than ordinary interest in the state of the barometer. And, as if in order to bring matters to a crisis, the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury, all of a sudden, recommended his clergy to pray for fair weather, and instantly drew down upon his gracious head the scientific wrath of Mr. Bailey Denton. The happy 'Times' overflowed with fair-weather correspondence as if in emulation of its neighbouring Thames, and, at last, the people who declared that the springs were still very low, seemed inclined to tell the Archbishop that if he did not take care what he was about they would pray for more wet, and that their prayers were just as good as his. The sympathies of the majority were, perhaps, on the side of the Archbishop, as they felt themselves unable to share in Mr. Denton's depressing joys; but still congregations in churches where prayers for fine weather were offered must have felt rather puzzled as to the amount of fervour they ought to put into their amens. I would not have it thought for a moment that I would dream of scoffing at the notion of praying for a change of weather, but still I would venture to suggest that before such applications are made to the Almighty, it should be generally recognised that the falling rain had become indeed a 'plague,' and that if it were not speedily stayed, the earth would not 'give forth its fruits in due season.'

But we have been discussing many other social topics since our return to town, and not unfrequently we have been led to talk of country dinner parties. We have wondered why many of the banquets we have assisted at should still be fashioned after ancient but uncomfortable precedents. As a guest, it was of course impossible to make the query, but, as chronicling the *Talk of the Town*, I beg to ask

my excellent hosts why they permit their servants to place the soup and fish together upon the table before their guests sit down, and whether it has never occurred to them that, in consequence of such a process, the fish must get lukewarm before it is devoured? I would further hint that, in these inventive days, there are other alternatives than saddle of mutton and boiled chickens and tongue, and that, anyhow, one dish should follow the other, and not be so persistently simultaneous. I may like mutton and I may like chicken, but why force them upon my notice at the same time? Give me one first and the other afterwards, and then I shall feel that you are endeavouring to do justice to your cook and to myself; but if your footman says to me, 'Mutton or chicken, sir?' you oblige me to decide hastily, and you don't give your cook a chance of distinguishing herself. But what I object to more than anything else, is the abominable habit of carving upon the table. Hungry as I may be, I am not such a barbarian or glutton that I gloat over the aspect of the roasted limbs a slice of which I am going to devour. I take no morbid pleasure in gazing at the headless trunk of a fowl, the wing of which I might consider as a delicate morsel. On the contrary, my appetite may be taken away by the reflection that not long ago that limb was coursing free among the green pastures, or that fowl was rejoicing in the innocent pastime of laying eggs. Again, should it be my proud lot to conduct the hostess to the dining-room, I am expected to play a menial part in carving for my fellow guests. Should there be many of us, the thing is worse than a social obligation, it becomes an intolerable bore. Con-

versation is rendered almost impossible, and the desires of the palate are mischievously quenched. The neat distribution of a turkey may be interesting, anatomically considered, but it is unspeakably disgusting when one has to perform it at a dinner party. Really, it is almost an insult to a man to ask him to dinner, and then to require him to spend his time in carving for a ravenous multitude. Why should he not be asked at once to change their plates? The English are proverbially slow in acquiring the art of dining, but we are scarcely likely to improve so long as we allow the enormities I have alluded to to exist.

One other complaint I have to make about country dinner parties. Why on earth are the gentlemen detained in the dining-room for some thirty or forty minutes after the ladies have left? I beg leave to say, that, in my opinion, the custom which still lingers as to the temporary separation of the sexes at dessert time is one more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Anything more barbarous or unchivalrous than this woful English habit it is impossible to conceive. The post-prandial consumption of port has entered into the realms of history, soon, let us hope, for the sake of our ancestors, to be regarded as a domestic myth; and the two-bottle man is only fit for a place in the restaurant of the South Kensington Museum. Gentlemen, now-a-days, take their wine with their dinner, and most of us feel that the tedious session of males after the departure of the ladies has become a downright bore, and is, when rightly considered, a decided corruption of good manners. And if, out of reverence for the 'good old times'—in which no reasonable modern being could possibly desire

to live—we still perpetuate an ancient fashion, surely ten minutes is quite sufficient for the superfluous consumption of alcoholic liquors. Social progress will be slow indeed, if within the next decade we have not entirely emancipated ourselves from the yoke of a degrading habit.

While on the subject of country customs, I should like to say a word or two as to *battues*. These slaughterous periods have been fruitful in furnishing matter for the eloquent discourse of ready writers in the daily press; and professional sportsmen have declaimed against them. These latter individuals have, no doubt, a great deal to say from their point of view. The man who goes out shooting from true love of sport, and likes to work for his game, feels that a succession of 'warm corners' palls after a time, and begins to understand what the dulled sensations of a butcher must usually be. But it appears to me that a *battue* is the necessary consequence of our present ridiculous system of game laws. The owner of large coverts, after having gone to a very considerable expense in rearing pheasants, knows very well that unless he and his friends shoot them all as soon as practicable, they will be stolen from him; that is to say, the poachers—the idlest and most determined rascals that our happy country can boast of—will clear the woods and sell the purloined game to dealers. This is no question of difference of opinion between landlord and tenant. Tenant farmers do not poach; they are frequently invited by their landlords to join the shoot, and most thoroughly they enjoy it. The existing game laws are all in favour of the ruffianly vagabonds who are too idle to earn money

by honest employment, and they expose the gamekeepers to the most brutal treatment, and permit them to do their duty to their masters at their peril. There is no denying the fact that game is an extremely valuable article of consumption in the market; then why, in the name of common sense, should it not be adequately protected? If a hare is worth five and sixpence, surely the theft of one ought to be punished as severely as the theft of a fowl worth, perhaps, three shillings. If a man breaks into my house and steals a tea-spoon of the value of eighteenpence, he is not unlikely to get seven years of penal servitude; but if the same man has another turn of mind, and merely trespasses on my land, and robs me one way and another of what has cost me fifty pounds, he is let off with a trifling pecuniary fine, or, at the worst, gets three months' imprisonment. The game laws, in their present shape, are simply a premium upon dishonesty. And so it comes to pass that the preservers of game are compelled, reluctantly in many cases, to resort to the system of the *battue*, which, I am more than ready to admit, is extremely distasteful to the true sportsman.

There is just one other point connected with country life that I should like briefly to touch upon, and that is 'tipping' servants. We have not unfrequently been favoured with correspondence in the 'Times' denouncing the custom as abominable and utterly indefensible. I am compelled to say that I cannot share in these denunciations; and though I have heard the question discussed with more or less acrimony during the past winter, I have seen no reason to change my convictions. Domestic service is by no means a

royal road to wealth, and I own to a feeling of contempt for the man who is perpetually declaiming against the system of 'tipping,' that is denouncing as immoral and intolerable conduct the practice of giving trifling gratuities to our friends' servants, when we have put them to a certain amount of extra trouble in our capacity as guests. Some people absolutely call it an unwarrantable social tax, and protest that they cannot afford to stay in country houses because the tips to the servants amount to such an overwhelming sum! It needs but a very little reflection to see what a gross exaggeration this is; for surely the individual who gets boarded and lodged for a week gratis need not grudge five shillings to the footman who has carefully attended to his smaller wants. People who live upon their friends may perhaps complain, or behave like the great Soapey Sponge, and do everything in the meanest possible manner; but such characters are the parasites of society, and command no sympathy. So, too, with the vexed question of feeing railway porters. No doubt these men are paid to perform certain duties, and have no right to expect any further compensation for their trouble, but, assuredly, there are crises at railway stations when a sixpence is well deserved; and assiduity, civility, and attention ought certainly to be occasionally encouraged. There is, however, one extortion familiarly practised which ought to be highly reprobated and repudiated, and that is the common charge in an hotel bill for attendance. Not content with the exorbitant prices the British hotel-keeper usually demands, he positively compels his visitors to indemnify him two or three times over for his servants

wages. Let us get rid of this iniquity before we concern ourselves about far smaller anxieties.

Not long ago 'Vanity Fair' succeeded in drawing a more than usual amount of social attention by an amusing article upon the 'Visiting Tax.' The conclusion at which the writer evidently desired his readers to arrive was that the time had come for a reconsideration of certain social laws, with a view either to their entire repeal, or a very considerable modification of them. What is the use, it is argued, of keeping up this farce of 'calling,' which bores both the caller and the callee to an extent which is getting absolutely intolerable? Why should we not candidly make mutual confessions of weakness, and publicly declare what we have long privately admitted, viz., that the existing system of afternoon visiting and card-dropping is a nuisance which we are all thoroughly tired of, to say nothing of its being a miserable sham? The answer is, I suppose, that on the whole the system is useful to a certain extent, and that as yet we are not prepared with a substitute: and, as to its being a sham, why, there is, perhaps, more to be said in its favour than on behalf of many other shams; and when a sham is universally acknowledged and deceives nobody, it can do no harm, and therefore cannot be considered as immoral. As to substitutes, it is suggested that if Lady Fashion announces at the commencement of the season that she will be happy to see her friends at five o'clock tea every Monday, the Countess of Candour every Tuesday, Mrs. Sneerwell every Wednesday, and so on, attendances or cards at these Souchong séances would fulfil all the requirements

of society. But it does not require much reflection to see that the remedy bids fair to be worse than the disease. Positive personal attendance would become absolutely necessary. The consumption of hot liquid would in many cases interfere seriously with the digestive arrangements for dinner: clubbites would be dragged into visitations from which they are now free, and, indeed, they would be compelled to spend the hour now devoted to evening papers and reading-room conversation in a watery talk which would inevitably dilute that social exchange of ideas which ought to be preserved for the dinner-table. Indeed, five o'clock tea anticipates the prandial and post-prandial epoch. The hour and the man are not ripe for each other. The existing practice of calling is merely the knot upon the handkerchief which satisfies the memory as to something that ought to be done; it is a general social reminder, and nothing more or less; and the great argument in its favour is that on the whole it answers the purpose for which it gradually grew into existence, and, like most customs, ought not to be lightly set aside. At present we can call, and generally find each other not 'at home'; we all perform our social duties, and are quite satisfied; but if we were obliged to present ourselves at five o'clock teas at least six days in the week, reserving the seventh for our receptions at home, surely we should be obliged to confess that in adopting the proposed system we should be what is vulgarly termed 'out of the frying-pan into the fire.'

There are certain individuals in the world the purpose of whose existence it is difficult to understand. We wonder as to the

object for which they were created, and why Providence did not place them in spheres in which they might have had a chance of distinguishing themselves; in aboriginal societies, for instance, where idiots are treated with extraordinary reverence. Nobody can have glanced at a publication called 'The Coming K——,' and further styled, for some incomprehensible reason, a 'Christmas Annual,' without wondering what the writer had got in his head instead of brains. But our amazement is increased at being assured that this publication is actually in considerable demand, and that the remaining copies fetch a price far above that which was originally marked upon the gaudy cover. We can only feel the truth of the old adage, that 'one fool makes many.' 'The Coming K——' consists of stupid parodies upon the 'Idylls of the King,' exhibiting the grossest bad taste and the blankest of blank verse, and teems with vulgarity which we should have expected that the publishers would have shrunk from giving to the world. One of the most touching and graceful compositions in the English language, Tennyson's 'Dedication of the Idylls to the Memory of the Prince Consort,' is burlesqued in a manner that can only make us sigh over the depths to which literature—if such stuff deserves the name—can fall. Even 'Guinevere' cannot escape the polluting touch of the disgraceful author of 'The Coming K——.' Parodies are only tolerable when they are the work of consummate wit; and of even the faintest shadow of borrowed humour this writer is wholly destitute. From first to last there is not one solitary line to redeem the dull grossness of fifty small print pages. We may put the whole publica-

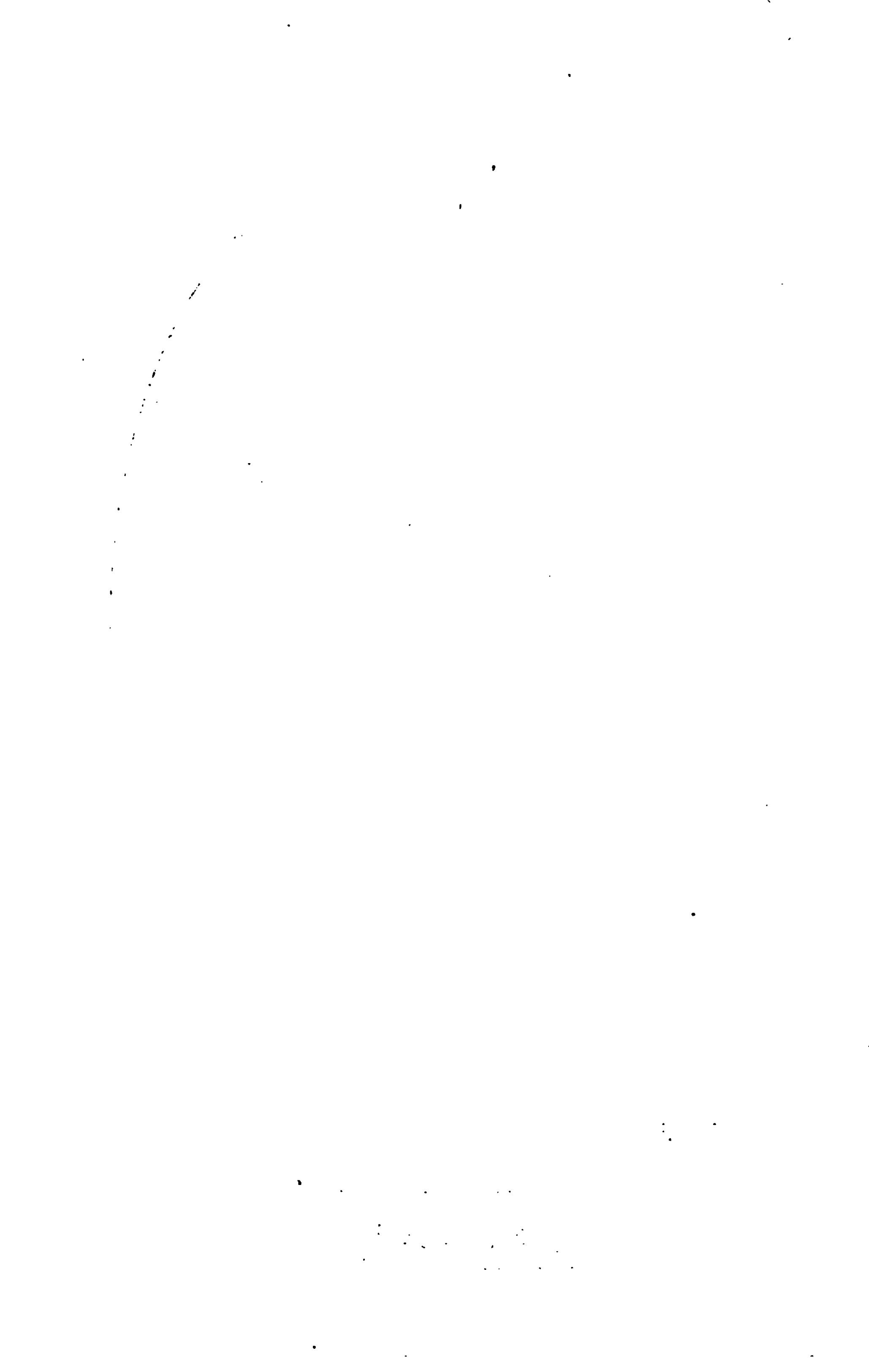
tion on a par with the mock 'litanies' sung by the abandoned ruffians at Hyde Park 'demonstrations'; and even then we are not sure that we are not unjust to the 'litanies;' for the author has evidently read Mr. Tennyson's works, which probably the authors of the 'litanies' have not. Whoever the compiler of this scurilous trash may be—and gossip says that he is a man old enough to know better—FREE LANCE takes leave of him with the following observations: 'Sir, you are the kind of thing that I thoroughly despise; you are dull, and you are nasty. If contact with you would not soil my boots, I should like to kick you. As it is, I most heartily commend you to the contempt of honest men. And I sincerely trust that I have seen the last of you.'

Not an hour too soon came Mr. Charles Reade's Letter to Sir Charles Dilke, published in 'Once a Week' for January 25th, on the 'Sham-Sample Swindle.' A correspondent of the 'Athenæum' stated that he had discovered that Mr. Reade's well-known story in the Christmas number of the 'Graphic' was nothing but a plagiarism from Swift; and Mr. Reade, with that vigorous energy that distinguishes all his writings, at once nails the criticaster's ears to the wall, as he promised he would treat somebody in 'Never too Late to Mend.' A great man once described the professional critics of his day as the brushers of noblemen's clothes; but their modern descendants may often be more fitly termed the detractors of genius. Nothing seems to please a newspaper critic more than if he chance to discover the source from which the story he is reviewing naturally flows. His one canon appears to be that mind must

never draw from mind, but invention—in his sense of the word—is the sole glory of the writer of fiction. Any one who takes the trouble to read the lucubrations of dramatic critics will have observed how invariably these gentlemen remark that the play they are honouring by their notice is 'obviously founded on' such and such a French play, or 'reminds them strongly of the incidents' in such and such a novel, or complain that the dramatist has not given them something entirely new and wholly unconventional, as if new conditions of hu-

man life could be perpetually originated by the playwright. And if the contemptuously - treated author turns publicly upon them, and gives them in their turn good reason to feel uncommonly small, their invariable reply is that a man has no right to criticise his critics! The more the Sham-Sample Swindle is exposed the better it will be for the public, and, in the long run, for the censors too; for it will teach these latter gentlemen to be more cautious, and restore our faith in their probity, their usefulness, and their abilities.

FREE LANCE.



Drawn by M. W. Ridley!

"AN APRIL DAISY."

"Childhood with its healthy cheek,
Red ripening lips and sweet glad eye,
Where truest love untainted lies,
Where beauty laughs and passion shows
Its colour like an opening rose."

LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL, 1873.

A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

By CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

CHAPTER XIV.

DOSA fell ill with grief at the R hotel, and could not move for some days; but, the moment she was strong enough, she insisted on leaving Plymouth: like all wounded things, she must drag herself home.

But what a home! How empty it struck, and she heart-sick and desolate. Now all the familiar places wore a new aspect: the little yard, where he had so walked and waited, became a temple to her, and she came out and sat in it, and now first felt to the full how much he had suffered there—with what fortitude. She crept about the house, and kissed the chair he had sat in, and every much used place and thing of the departed.

Her shallow nature deepened and deepened under this bereavement, of which, she said to herself, with a shudder, she was the cause. And this is the course of nature; there is nothing like suffering to enlighten the giddy brain, widen the narrow mind, improve the trivial heart.

As her regrets were tender and deep, so her vows of repentance were sincere. Oh, what a wife

she would make when he came back! how thoughtful! how prudent! how loyal! and never have a secret. She who had once said, ‘What is the use of your writing? nobody will publish it,’ now collected and perused every written scrap. With simple affection, she even locked up his very waste-paper basket, full of fragments he had torn, or useless papers he had thrown there, before he went to Plymouth.

In the drawer of his writing-table she found his diary. It was a thick quarto: it began with their marriage, and ended with his leaving home—for then he took another volume. This diary became her Bible; she studied it daily, till her tears hid his lines. The entries were very miscellaneous, very exact; it was a map of their married life. But what she studied most was his observations on her own character, so scientific, yet so kindly; and his scholarlike and wise reflections. The book was an unconscious picture of a great mind she had hitherto but glanced at: now she saw it all plain before her; saw it, understood it, adored it,

mourned it. Such women are shallow, not for want of a head upon their shoulders, but of *attention*. They do not really study anything: they have been taught at their schools the bad art of skimming; but, let their hearts compel their brains to think and think, the result is considerable. The deepest philosopher never fathomed a character more thoroughly than this poor child fathomed her philosopher, when she had read his journal ten or eleven times, and bedewed it with a thousand tears.

One passage almost cut her more intelligent heart in twain:—

'This dark day I have done a thing incredible. I have spoken with brutal harshness to the innocent creature I have sworn to protect. She had run in debt, through inexperience, and that unhappy timidity which makes women conceal an error till it ramifies, by concealment, into a fault; and I must storm and rave at her, till she actually fainted away. Brute! Ruffian! Monster! And she, how did she punish me, poor lamb? By soft and tender words—like a lady, as she is. Oh, my sweet Rosa, I wish you could know how you are avenged. Talk of the scourge—the cat! I would be thankful for two dozen lashes. Ah! there is no need, I think, to punish a man who has been cruel to a woman. Let him alone. He will punish himself more than you can, if he is really a man.'

From the date of that entry, this self-reproach and self-torture kept cropping up every now and then in the diary; and it appeared to have been not entirely without its influence in sending Staines to sea, though the main reason he gave was that his Rosa might have the comforts and luxuries she had enjoyed before she married him.

One day, while she was crying

over this diary, Uncle Philip called; but not to comfort her, I promise you. He burst on her, irate, to take her to task. He had returned, learned Christopher's departure, and settled the reason in his own mind; that uxorious fool was gone to sea by a natural reaction; his eyes were open to his wife at last, and he was sick of her folly; so he had fled to distant climes, as who would not, that could?

'So, ma'am,' said he, 'my nephew is gone to sea, I find—all in a hurry. Pray may I ask what he has done that for?'

It was a very simple question, yet it did not elicit a very plain answer. She only stared at this abrupt inquisitor, and then cried, piteously, 'Oh, Uncle Philip!' and burst out sobbing.

'Why, what is the matter?'

'You will hate me now. He is gone to make money for me; and I would rather have lived on a crust. Uncle — don't hate me. I'm a poor, bereaved, heart-broken creature, that repents.'

'Repents! heigho! why what have you been up to now, ma'am? No great harm, I'll be bound. Flirting a little—with some fool—eh?'

'Flirting! Me! a married woman.'

'Oh, to be sure; I forgot. Why surely he has not deserted you.'

'My Christopher desert me! He loves me too well; far more than I deserve; but not more than I will. Uncle Philip, I am too confused and wretched to tell you all that has happened; but I know you love him, though you had a tiff: Uncle, he called on you, to shake hands and ask your forgiveness, poor fellow! He was so sorry you were away. Please read his dear diary: it will tell you all, better than his poor foolish wife can. I know it by heart. I'll

show you where you and he quarrelled about me. There see.' And she showed him the passage with her finger. 'He never told me it was that, or I would have come and begged your pardon on my knees. But see how sorry he was. There see. 'And now I'll show you another place, where my Christopher speaks of your many many acts of kindness. There see. And now please let me show you how he longed for reconciliation. There see. And it is the same through the book. And now I'll show you how grieved he was to go without your blessing. I told him I was sure you would give him that, and him going away. Ah me! will he ever return? Uncle dear, don't hate me. What shall I do, now he is gone, if you disown me? Why you are the only Staines left me to love.'

'Disown you, ma'am! that I'll never do. You are a good-hearted young woman, I find. There, run and dry your eyes; and let me read Christopher's diary all through. Then I shall see how the land lies.'

Rosa complied with this proposal; and left him alone while she bathed her eyes, and tried to compose herself, for she was all trembling at this sudden irruption.

When she returned to the drawing-room, he was walking about, looking grave and thoughtful.

'It is the old story,' said he, rather gently: 'a *misunderstanding*. How wise our ancestors were that first used that word to mean a quarrel! for look into twenty quarrels, and you shall detect a score of mis-understandings. Yet our American cousins must go and substitute the unidealized word, "difficulty;" that is wonderful. I had no quarrel with him: delighted to see either of you. But I had called twice on him; so I

thought he ought to get over his temper, and call on a tried friend like me. A misunderstanding!! Now, my dear, let us have no more of these misunderstandings. You will always be welcome at my house, and I shall often come here and look after you and your interests. What do you mean to do, I wonder!'

'Sir, I am to go home to my father, if he will be troubled with me. I have written to him.'

'And what is to become of the Bijou?'

'My Christie thought I should like to part with it, and the furniture—but his own writing-desk and his chair, no, I never will, and his little clock. Oh! oh! oh!—But I remember what you said about agents, and I don't know what to do; for I shall be away.'

'Then, leave it to me. I'll come and live here with one servant; and I'll soon sell it for you.'

'You, Uncle Philip!'

'Well, why not?' said he, roughly.

'That will be a great trouble and discomfort to you, I'm afraid.'

'If I find it so, I'll soon drop it. I'm not the fool to put myself out for anybody. When you are ready to go out, send me word, and I'll come in.'

Soon after this he hustled off. He gave her a sort of hurried kiss at parting, as if he was ashamed of it, and wanted it over as quickly as possible.

Next day her father came, condoled with her politely, assured her there was nothing to cry about; husbands were a sort of functionaries, that generally went to sea at some part of their career, and no harm ever came of it. On the contrary, 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder,' said this judicious parent.

This sentiment happened to be just a little too true, and set the daughter crying bitterly. But she fought against it. ‘Oh, no!’ said she. ‘I *mustn’t*. I will not be always crying in Kent Villa.’

‘Lord forbid!’

‘I shall get over it in time—a little.’

‘Why, of course you will. But, as to your coming to Kent Villa, I am afraid you would not be very comfortable there. You know I am superannuated. Only got my pension now.’

‘I know that, papa: and—why, that is one of the reasons. I have a good income now; and I thought if we put our means together.’

‘Oh, that is a very different thing. You will want a carriage, I suppose. I have put mine down.’

‘No carriage; no horse; no footman; no luxury of any kind, till my Christie comes back. I abhor dress; I abhor expense; I loathe everything I once liked too well; I detest every folly that has parted us; and I hate myself worst of all. Oh! oh! oh! Forgive me for crying so.’

‘Well, I daresay there are associations about this place that upset you. I shall go and make ready for you, dear; and then you can come as soon as you like.’

He bestowed a paternal kiss on her brow, and glided dourly away before she could possibly cry again.

The very next week Rosa was at Kent villa, with the relics of her husband about her; his chair, his writing-table, his clock, his waste-paper basket, a very deep and large one. She had them all in her bedroom at Kent Villa.

Here the days glided quietly, but heavily.

She derived some comfort from Uncle Philip. His rough, friendly way was a tonic, and braced her.

He called several times about the Bijou. Told her he had put up enormous boards all over the house, and puffed it finely. ‘I have had a hundred agents at me,’ said he; ‘and the next thing, I hope, will be one customer; that is about the proportion.’ At last he wrote her he had hooked a victim, and sold the lease and furniture for nine hundred guineas. Staines had assigned the lease to Rosa, so she had full powers; and Philip invested the money, and two hundred more she gave him, in a little mortgage at six per cent.

Now came the letter from Madeira. It gave her new life. Christopher was well, contented, hopeful. His example should animate her. She would bravely bear the present, and share his hopes of the future: with these brighter views Nature co-operated. The instincts of approaching maternity brightened the future. She fell into gentle reveries, and saw her husband return, and saw herself place their infant in his arms with all a wife’s, a mother’s pride.

In due course came another long letter from the equator, with a full journal, and more words of hope. Home in less than a year, with reputation increased by this last cure; home, to part no more.

Ah! what a changed wife he should find! how frugal, how candid, how full of appreciation, admiration, and love, of the noblest, dearest husband that ever breathed!

Lady Cicely Treherne waited some weeks, to let kinder sentiments return. She then called in Dear Street, but found Mrs. Staines was gone to Gravesend. She wrote to her.

In a few days she received a reply, studiously polite and cold.

This persistent injustice mortified her at last. She said to herself, 'Does she think his departure was no loss to me? It was to her interests, as well as his, I sacrificed my own selfish wishes. I will write to her no more.'

This resolution she steadily maintained. It was shaken for a moment, when she heard, by a side wind, that Mrs. Staines was fast approaching the great pain and peril of women. Then she wavered. But no. She prayed for her by name in the liturgy, but she troubled her no more.

This state of things had lasted some six weeks, when she received a letter from her cousin Tadcaster, close on the heels of his last, to which she had replied as I have indicated. She knew his handwriting, and opened it with a smile.

That smile soon died off her horror-stricken face. The letter ran thus:—

‘Tristan d’Acunha,
‘Jan. 5.

‘DEAR CICELY,

‘A terrible thing has just happened. We signalled a raft, with a body on it, and poor Dr. Staines leaned out of the port-hole, and fell overboard. Three boats were let down after him; but it all went wrong, somehow, or it was too late. They could never find him, he was drowned; and the funeral service was read for the poor fellow.

‘We are all sadly cut up. Everybody loved him. It was dreadful next day at dinner, when his chair was empty. The very sailors cried at not finding him.

‘First of all, I thought I ought to write to his wife. I know where she lives; it is called Kent Villa, Gravesend. But I was afraid: it might kill her: and you are so good and sensible, I

thought I had better write to you, and perhaps you could break it to her by degrees, before it gets in all the papers.

‘I send this from the island, by a small vessel, and paid him ten pounds to take it.

‘Your affectionate cousin,
‘TADCASTER.’

Words are powerless to describe a blow like this: the amazement, the stupor, the reluctance to believe—the rising, swelling, surging horror. She sat like a woman of stone, crumpling the letter. ‘Dead!—dead?’

For a long time this was all her mind could realise—that Christopher Staines was dead. He who had been so full of life and thought and genius, and worthier to live than all the world, was dead; and a million nobodies were still alive, and he was dead.

She lay back on the sofa, and all the power left her limbs. She could not move a hand.

But suddenly she started up; for a noble instinct told her this blow must not fall on the wife as it had on her, and in her time of peril.

She had her bonnet on in a moment, and, for the first time in her life, darted out of the house without her maid. She flew along the streets, scarcely feeling the ground. She got to Dear Street, and obtained Philip Staines’ address. She flew to it, and there learned he was down at Kent Villa. Instantly she telegraphed to her maid to come down to her at Gravesend, with things for a short visit, and wait for her at the station; and she went down by train to Gravesend.

Hitherto she had walked on air, driven by one overpowering impulse. Now, as she sat in the train, she thought a little of her-

self. What was before her? To break to Mrs. Staines that her husband was dead. To tell her all her misgivings were more than justified. To encounter her cold civility, and let her know, inch by inch, it must be exchanged for curses and tearing of hair; her husband was dead. To tell her this, and, in the telling of it, perhaps reveal that it was her great bereavement, as well as the wife's, for she had a deeper affection for him than she ought.

Well, she trembled like an aspen leaf, trembled like one in an ague, even as she sat. But she persevered.

A noble woman has her courage; not exactly the same as that which leads forlorn hopes against bastions bristling with rifles and tongued with flames and thunderbolts; yet not inferior to it.

Tadcaster, small and dull, but noble by birth and instinct, had seen the right thing for her to do; and she, of the same breed, and nobler far, had seen it too; and the great soul steadily drew the recoiling heart and quivering body to this fiery trial, this act of humanity—to do which was terrible and hard, to shirk it, cowardly and cruel.

She reached Gravesend, and drove in a fly to Kent Villa.

The door was opened by a maid.

'Is Mrs. Staines at home?'

'Yes, ma'am, she is *at home*: but—'

'Can I see her?'

'Why, no, ma'am: not at present.'

'But I must see her. I am an old friend. Please take her my card. Lady Cicely Treherne.'

The maid hesitated, and looked confused. 'Perhaps you don't know, ma'am. Mrs. Staines, she is—the doctor have been in the house all day.'

'Ah, the doctor! I believe Dr. Philip Staines is here.'

'Why, that is the doctor, ma'am. Yes, he is here.'

'Then, pray let me see him—or no; I had better see Mr. Lusignan.'

'Master have gone out for the day, ma'am; but if you'll step in the drawing-room, I'll tell the doctor.'

Lady Cicely waited in the drawing-room some time, heart-sick, and trembling.

At last Doctor Philip came in, with her card in his hand, looking evidently a little cross at the interruption. 'Now, madam, please tell me, as briefly as you can, what I can do for you.'

'Are you Dr. Philip Staines?'

'I am, madam, at your service—for five minutes. Can't quit my patient long, just now.'

'Oh, sir, thank God I have found you. Be prepared for ill news—sad news—a terrible calamity—I can't speak. Read that, sir.' And she handed him Tadcaster's note.

He took it, and read it.

He buried his face in his hands. 'Christopher! my poor, poor boy!' he groaned. But suddenly a terrible anxiety seized him. 'Who knows of this?' he asked.

'Only myself, sir. I came here to break it to her.'

'You are a good, kind lady, for being so thoughtful. Madam, if this gets to my niece's ears, it will kill her, as sure as we stand here.'

'Then let us keep it from her. Command me, sir. I will do anything. I will live here—take the letters in—the journals—anything.'

'No, no; you have done your part, and God bless you for it. I must stay here. Your ladyship's very presence, and your agitation, would set the servants talking, and some idiot-fiend among them

babbling—there is nothing so terrible as a fool.'

' May I stay at the inn, sir; just one night?'

' Oh, yes, I wish you would; and I will run over, if all is well with her—well with her? poor unfortunate girl!'

Lady Cicely saw he wished her gone, and she went directly.

At nine o'clock that same evening, as she lay on a sofa in the best room of the inn, attended by her maid, Dr. Philip Staines came to her. She dismissed her maid.

Dr. Philip was too old, in other words had lost too many friends, to be really broken down by a bereavement; but he was strangely subdued. The loud tones were out of him, and the loud laugh, and even the keen sneer. Yet he was the same man; but with a gentler surface; and this was not without its pathos.

' Well, madam,' said he, gravely and quietly. ' It is as it always has been. "As is the race of leaves, so that of man." When one falls, another comes. Here's a little Christopher come, in place of him that is gone: a brave, beautiful boy, ma'am; the finest but one I ever brought into the world. He is come to take his father's place in our hearts—I see you valued his poor father, ma'am—but he comes too late for me. At your age, ma'am, friendships come naturally; they spring like loves in the soft heart of youth: at seventy, the gate is not so open; the soil is more sterile. I shall never care for another Christopher; never see another grow to man's estate.'

' The mother, sir,' sobbed Lady Cicely; ' the poor mother?'

' Like them all—poor creature: in heaven, madam; in heaven. New life! new existence! a new character. All the pride, glory, rapture, and amazement of ma-

ternity—thanks to her ignorance, which we must prolong, or I would not give one straw for her life, or her son's. I shall never leave the house till she does know it, and, come when it may, I dread the hour. She is not framed by nature to bear so deadly a shock.'

' Her father, sir. Would he not be the best person to break it to her? He was out to-day.'

' Her father, ma'am? I shall get no help from him. He is one of those soft, gentle creatures that come into the world with what your canting fools call a mission; and his mission is to take care of number one. Not dishonestly, mind you, nor violently, nor rudely, but doucely and calmly. The care a brute like me takes of his vitals, that care Lusignan takes of his outer cuticle. His number one is a sensitive plant. No scenes, no noise: nothing painful — bye-the-bye, the little creature that writes in the papers, and calls calamities *painful*, is of Lusignan's breed. Out to-day! of course he was out, ma'am: he knew from me his daughter would be in peril all day, so he visited a friend. He knew his own tenderness, and evaded paternal sensibilities: a self-defender. I count on no help from that charming man.'

' A man! I call such creachaas weptiles!' said Lady Cicely, her ghastly cheek colouring for a moment.

' Then you give them a false importance.'

In the course of this interview, Lady Cicely accused herself sadly of having interfered between man and wife, and, with the best intentions, brought about this cruel calamity. ' Judge, then, sir,' said she, ' how grateful I am to you for undertaking this cruel task. I was her school-fellow, sir, and I love her dearly; but she has turned against me, and now, oh,

with what horror she will regard me!'

'Madam,' said the doctor, 'there is nothing more mean and unjust, than to judge others by events that none could foresee. Your conscience is clear. You did your best for my poor nephew: but Fate willed it otherwise. As for my niece, she has many virtues, but justice is one you must not look for in that quarter. Justice requires brains. It's a virtue the heart does not deal in. You must be content with your own good conscience, and an old man's esteem. You did all for the best; and this very day you have done a good, kind action. God bless you for it!'

Then he left her; and next day she went sadly home, and for many a long day the hollow world saw nothing of Cicely Treherne.

When Mr. Lusignan came home that night, Dr. Philip told him the miserable story, and his fears. He received it, not as Philip had expected. The bachelor had counted without his dormant paternity. He was terror-stricken—abject—fell into a chair, and wrung his hands, and wept pitifully. To keep it from his daughter, till she should be stronger, seemed to him chimerical, impossible. However, Philip insisted it must be done; and he must make some excuse for keeping out of her way, or his manner would rouse her suspicions. He consented readily to that, and indeed left all to Dr. Philip.

Dr. Philip trusted nobody; not even his own confidential servant. He allowed no journal to come into the house without passing through his hands, and he read them all, before he would let any other soul in the house see them.

He asked Rosa to let him be her secretary and open her letters, giving as a pretext that it would be as well she should have no small worries or trouble just now.

'Why,' said she, 'I was never so well able to bear them. It must be a great thing to put me out now. I am so happy, and live in the future. Well, dear uncle, you can if you like—what does it matter?—only there must be one exception: my own Christie's letters, you know.'

'Of course,' said he, wincing inwardly.

The very next day came a letter of condolence from Miss Lucas. Dr. Philip intercepted it, and locked it up, to be shown her at a more fitting time.

But how could he hope to keep so public a thing as this from entering the house in one of a hundred newspapers?

He went into Gravesend, and searched all the newspapers, to see what he had to contend with. To his horror, he found it in several dailies and weeklies, and in two illustrated papers. He sat aghast at the difficulty and the danger.

The best thing he could think of was to buy them all, and cut out the account. He did so, and brought all the papers, thus mutilated, into the house, and sent them into the kitchen. He said to his old servant, 'These may amuse Mr. Lusignan's people, and I have extracted all that interests me.'

By these means he hoped that none of the servants would go and buy any more of these same papers elsewhere.

Notwithstanding these precautions, he took the nurse apart, and said, 'Now, you are an experienced woman, and to be trusted about an excitable patient. Mind, I object to any female servant

entering Mrs. Staines's room with gossip. Keep them outside the door, for the present, please. Oh, and nurse, if anything should happen, likely to grieve or worry her, it must be kept from her entirely: can I trust you?"

" You may, sir."

" I shall add ten guineas to your fee, if she gets through the month without a shock or disturbance of any kind."

She stared at him inquiringly. Then she said,

" You may rely on me, doctor."

" I feel I may. Still, she alarms me. She looks quiet enough, but she is very excitable."

Not all these precautions gave Dr. Philip any real sense of security; still less did they to Mr. Lusignan. He was not a tender father, in small things, but the idea of actual danger to his only child was terrible to him; and he now passed his life in a continual tremble.

This is the less to be wondered at, when I tell you that even the stout Philip began to lose his nerve, his appetite, his sleep, under this hourly terror and this hourly torture.

Well did the great imagination of Antiquity feign a torment, too great for the mind long to endure, in the sword of Damocles suspended by a single hair over his head. Here the sword hung over an innocent creature, who smiled beneath it, fearless; but these two old men must sit and watch the sword, and ask themselves how long before that subtle salvation shall snap.

" Ill news travels fast," says the proverb: "The birds of the air shall carry the matter," says Holy Writ: and it is so. No bolts nor bars, no promises nor precautions, can long shut out a great calamity from the ears it is to blast, the heart it is to wither.

The very air seems full of it, until it falls.

Rosa's child was more than a fortnight old; and she was looking more beautiful than ever, as is often the case with a very young mother, and Dr. Philip complimented her on her looks. " Now," said he, " you reap the advantage of being good, and obedient, and keeping quiet. In another ten days or so, I may take you to the seaside for a week. I have the honour to inform you that, from about the fourth to the tenth of March there is always a week of fine weather, which takes everybody by surprise, except me. It does not astonish me, because I observe it is invariable. Now, what would you say if I gave you a week at Herne Bay, to set you up altogether?"

" As you please, dear uncle," said Mrs. Staines, with a sweet smile. " I shall be very happy to go, or to stay. I shall be happy everywhere, with my darling boy, and the thought of my husband. Why, I count the days till he shall come back to me. No, to us; to us, my pet. How dare a naughty mammy say " to me," as if " me" was half the 'portance of oo, a precious pets."

Dr. Philip was surprised into a sigh.

" What is the matter, dear?" said Rosa, very quickly.

" The matter?"

" Yes, dear, the matter. You sighed; you, the laughing philosopher."

" Did I?" said he, to gain time. " Perhaps I remembered the uncertainty of human life, and of all mortal hopes. The old will have their thoughts, my dear. They have seen so much trouble."

" But, uncle dear, he is a very healthy child."

" Very."

" And you told me yourself care-

lessness was the cause so many children die.'

'That is true.'

She gave him a curious and rather searching look; then, leaning over her boy, said, 'Mammy's not afraid. Beautiful Pet was not born to die directly. He will never leave his mam-ma. No, uncle, he never can. For my life is bound in his and his dear father's. It is a triple cord: one go, go all.'

She said this with a quiet resolution that chilled Uncle Philip.

At this moment the nurse, who had been bending so pertinaciously over some work, that her eyes were invisible, looked quickly up, cast a furtive glance at Mrs. Staines, and, finding she was employed for the moment, made an agitated signal to Dr. Philip. All she did was to clench her two hands and lift them half-way to her face, and then cast a frightened look towards the door: but Philip's senses were so sharpened by constant alarm and watching, that he saw at once something serious was the matter. But, as he had asked himself what he should do in case of some sudden alarm, he merely gave a nod of intelligence to the nurse, scarcely perceptible, then rose quietly from his seat, and went to the window. 'Snow coming, I think,' said he. 'For all that we shall have the March summer in ten days. You mark my words.' He then went leisurely out of the room: at the door he turned and, with all the cunning he was master of, said, 'Oh, by-the-by, come to my room, nurse, when you are at leisure.'

'Yes, doctor,' said the nurse; but never moved. She was too bent on hiding the agitation she really felt.

'Had you not better go to him, nurse?' -

'Perhaps I had, madam.'

'She rose with feigned indif-

ference, and left the room. She walked leisurely down the passage, then, casting a hasty glance behind her, for fear Mrs. Staines should be watching her, hurried into the doctor's room. They met at once in the middle of the room, and Mrs. Briscoe burst out, 'Sir, it is known all over the house!'

'Heaven forbid! What is known?'

'What you would give the world to keep from her. Why, sir, the moment you cautioned me, of course I saw there was trouble. But little I thought—sir, not a servant in the kitchen or the stable but knows that her husband—poor thing! poor thing!—Ah! there goes the housemaid—to have a look at her.'

'Stop her!'

Mrs. Briscoe had not waited for this; she rushed after the woman, and told her Mrs. Staines was sleeping, and the room must not be entered on any account.

'Oh, very well,' said the maid, rather sullenly.

Mrs. Briscoe saw her return to the kitchen, and came back to Dr. Staines: he was pacing the room in torments of anxiety.

'Doctor,' said she, 'it is the old story; "Servants' friends, the master's enemies." An old servant came here to gossip with her friend the cook (she never could abide her while they were together, by all accounts), and told her the whole story of his being drowned at sea.'

Dr. Philip groaned. 'Cursed chatterbox!' said he. 'What is to be done? Must we break it to her now? Oh, if I could only buy a few days more! The heart to be crushed while the body is weak! It is too cruel. Advise me, Mrs. Briscoe. You are an experienced woman, and I think you are a kind-hearted woman.'

'Well, sir,' said Mrs. Briscoe,

'I had the name of it, when I was younger—before Briscoe failed, and I took to nursing; which it hardens, sir, by use, and along of the patients themselves; for sick folk are lumps of selfishness; we see more of them than you do, sir. But this I will say, tisn't selfishness that lies now in that room, waiting for the blow that will bring her to death's door, I'm sore afraid; but a sweet, gentle, thoughtful creature, as ever supped sorrow: for I don't know how 'tis, Doctor, nor why 'tis, but an angel like that has always to sup sorrow.'

'But you do not advise me,' said the doctor, in agitation, 'and something must be done.'

'Advise you, sir: it is not for me to do that. I am sure I'm at my wits' ends, poor thing! Well, sir, I don't see what you can do, but try and break it to her. Better so, than let it come to her like a clap of thunder. But I think, sir, I'd have a wet-nurse ready, before I said much: for she is very quick—and ten to one but the first word of such a thing turns her blood to gall. Sir, I once knew a poor woman—she was a carpenter's wife—a nursing her child, in the afternoon—and in runs a foolish woman, and tells her he was killed dead, off a scaffold. 'Twas the man's sister told her. Well, sir, she was knocked stupid like, and she sat staring, and nursing of her child, before she could take it in rightly. The child was dead before supper-time, and the woman was not long after. The whole family was swept away, sir, in a few hours, and I mind the table was not cleared he had dined on when they came to lay them out. Well-a-day, nurses see sorrow!'

'We all see sorrow, that live long, Mrs. Briscoe. I am heart-broken myself; I am desperate.

You are a good soul, and I'll tell you. When my nephew married this poor girl, I was very angry with him; and I soon found she was not fit to be a struggling man's wife; and then I was very angry with her. She had spoiled a first-rate physician, I thought. But, since I knew her better, it is all changed. She is so lovable. How I shall ever tell her this terrible thing, God knows. All I know is, that I will not throw a chance away. Her body shall be stronger, before I break her heart. Cursed idiots, that could not save a single man, with their boats, in a calm sea! Lord forgive me for blaming people, when I was not there to see. I say I will give her every chance. She shall not know it till she is stronger: no, not if I live at her door; and sleep there, and all. Good God! inspire me with something. There is always something to be done, if one could but see it.'

Mrs. Briscoe sighed, and said, 'Sir, I think anything is better than for her to hear it from a servant—and they are sure to blurt it out. Young women are such fools.'

'No, no: I see what it is,' said Dr. Philip. 'I have gone all wrong from the first. I have been acting like a woman, when I should have acted like a man. Why, I only trusted you by halves. There was a fool for you. Never trust people by halves.'

'That is true, sir.'

'Well, then, now I shall go at it like a man. I have a vile opinion of servants; but no matter. I'll try them: they are human, I suppose. I'll hit them between the eyes like a man. Go to the kitchen, Mrs. Briscoe, and tell them I wish to speak to all the servants, in-doors or out.'

'Yes, sir.'

She stopped at the door, and

said, 'I had better get back to her, as soon as I have told them.'

'Certainly.'

'And what shall I tell her, sir? Her first word will be to ask me what you wanted me for. I saw that in her eye. She was curious: that is why she sent me after you so quick.'

Doctor Philip groaned. He felt he was walking among pitfalls. He rapidly flavoured some distilled water with orange-flower, then tinted it a beautiful pink, and bottled it. 'There,' said he; 'I was mixing a new medicine. Table-spoon, four times a day: had to filter it. Any lie you like.'

Mrs. Briscoe went to the kitchen, and gave her message: then went to Mrs. Staines, with the mixture.

Doctor Philip went down to the kitchen, and spoke to the servants very solemnly. He said, 'My good friends, I am come to ask your help in a matter of life and death. There is a poor young woman upstairs; she is a widow, and does not know it; and must not know it yet. If the blow fell now, I think it would kill her: indeed, if she hears it all of a sudden, at any time, that might destroy her. We are in so sore a strait that a feather may turn the scale. So we must try all we can, to gain a little time, and then trust to God's mercy after all. Well, now what do you say? Will you help me keep it from her, till the tenth of March, say? and then I will break it to her by degrees. Forget she is your mistress. Master and servant, that is all very well at a proper time; but this is the time to remember nothing but that we are all one flesh and blood. We lie down together in the church-yard, and we hope to rise together where there will be no master and servant. Think of the poor un-

fortunate creature as your own flesh and blood, and tell me, will you help me try and save her, under this terrible blow?'

'Ay, doctor, that we will,' said the footman. 'Only you give us our orders, and you will see.'

'I have no right to give you orders; but I entreat you not to show her, by word or look, that calamity is upon her. Alas! it is only a reprieve you can give to her and to me. The bitter hour must come when I must tell her she is a widow, and her boy an orphan. When that day comes, I will ask you all to pray for me that I may find words. But now I ask you to give me that ten-days' reprieve. Let the poor creature recover a little strength, before the thunderbolt of affliction falls on her head. Will you promise me?'

They promised heartily; and more than one of the women began to cry.

'A general assent will not satisfy me,' said Dr. Philip. 'I want every man, and every woman, to give me a hand upon it; then I shall feel sure of you.'

The men gave him their hands at once. The women wiped their hands with their aprons, to make sure they were clean, and gave him their hands too. The cook said, 'If any one of us goes from it, this kitchen will be too hot to hold her.'

'Nobody will go from it, cook,' said the doctor. 'I'm not afraid of that: and now, since you have promised me, out of your own good hearts, I'll try and be even with you. If she knows nothing of it by the tenth of March, five guineas to every man and woman in this kitchen. You shall see that, if you can be kind, we can be grateful.'

He then hurried away. He found Mr. Lusignan in the drawing-room, and told him all this.

Lusignan was fluttered, but grateful. ‘Ah, my good friend,’ said he, ‘this is a hard trial to two old men, like you and me.’

‘It is,’ said Philip. ‘It has shown me my age. I declare I am trembling; I, whose nerves were iron. But I have a particular contempt for servants. Mercenary wretches! I think Heaven inspired me to talk to them. After all, who knows? perhaps we might find a way to their hearts, if we did not eternally shock their vanity, and forget that it is, and must be, far greater than our own. The women gave me their tears, and the men were earnest. Not one hand lay cold in mine. As for your kitchen-maid, I’d trust my life to that girl. What a grip she gave me! What strength! What fidelity was in it! My hand was never grasped before. I think we are safe for a few days more.’

Lusignan sighed. ‘What does it all come to? We are pulling the trigger gently, that is all.’

‘No, no; that is not it. Don’t let us confound the matter with similes, please. Keep them for children.’

Mrs. Staines left her bed; and would have left her room, but Doctor Philip forbade it strictly.

One day, seated in her arm-chair, she said to the nurse, before Doctor Philip, ‘Nurse, why do the servants look so curiously at me?’

Mrs. Briscoe cast a hasty glance at Doctor Philip, and then said, ‘I don’t know, madam. I never noticed that.’

‘Uncle, why did nurse look at you before she answered such a simple question?’

‘I don’t know. What question?’

‘About the servants.’

‘Oh, about the servants!’ said he, contemptuously.

‘You should not turn up your nose at them, for they are all most kind and attentive. Only, I catch them looking at me so strangely; really—as if they——’

‘Rosa, you are taking me quite out of my depth. The looks of servant girls! Why, of course a lady in your condition is an object of especial interest to them. I daresay they are saying to one another, “I wonder when my turn will come?” A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind—that is a proverb, is it not?’

‘To be sure. I forgot that.’

She said no more; but seemed thoughtful, and not quite satisfied.

On this Dr. Philip begged the maids to go near her as little as possible. ‘You are not aware of it,’ said he, ‘but your looks, and your manner of speaking, rouse her attention, and she is quicker than I thought she was, and observes very subtly.’

This was done; and then she complained that nobody came near her. She insisted on coming downstairs; it was so dull.

Dr. Philip consented, if she would be content to receive no visits for a week.

She assented to that; and now passed some hours every day in the drawing-room. In her morning wrappers, so fresh and crisp, she looked lovely, and increased in health and strength every day.

Dr. Philip used to look at her, and his very flesh to creep at the thought that, ere long, he must hurl this fair creature into the dust of affliction; must, with a word, take the ruby from her lips, the rose from her cheeks, the sparkle from her glorious eyes—eyes that beamed on him with sweet affection, and a mouth that never opened, but to show some simplicity of the mind, or some

pretty burst of the sensitive heart.

He put off, and put off, and at last cowardice began to whisper, ‘ Why tell her the whole truth at all? Why not take her through stages of doubt, alarm, and, after all, leave a grain of hope till her child gets so rooted in her heart that—’ But conscience and good sense interrupted this temporary thought, and made him see to what a horrible life of suspense he should condemn a human creature, and live a perpetual lie, and be always at the edge of some pitfall or other.

One day, while he sat looking at her, with all these thoughts, and many more, coursing through his mind, she looked up at him, and surprised him, ‘ Ah! ’ said she, gravely.

‘ What is the matter, my dear? ’

‘ Oh, nothing,’ said she cunningly.

‘ Uncle dear,’ said she, presently, ‘ when do we go to Herne Bay? ’

Now, Dr. Philip had given that up. He had got the servants at Kent Villa on his side, and he felt safer here than in any strange place: so he said, ‘ I don’t know: that all depends. There is plenty of time.’

‘ No, uncle,’ said Rosa, gravely. ‘ I wish to leave this house. I can hardly breathe in it.’

‘ What! your native air? ’

‘ Mystery is not my native air; and this house is full of mystery. Voices whisper at my door, and the people don’t come in. The maids cast strange looks at me, and hurry away. I scolded that pert girl, Jane, and she answered me as meek as Moses. I catch you looking at me, with love, and something else. What is that something?—It is Pity: that is what it is. Do you think, because I am called a simpleton, that I have no eyes, nor ears, nor sense? ’

What is this secret which you are all hiding from one person, and that is me? Ah! Christopher has not written this five weeks. Tell me the truth, for I will know it,’ and she started up in wild excitement.

Then Dr. Philip saw the hour was come.

He said, ‘ My poor girl, you have read us right. I am anxious about Christopher, and all the servants know it.’

‘ Anxious, and not tell me; his wife; the woman whose life is bound up in his.’

‘ Was it for us to retard your convalescence, and set you fretting, and perhaps destroy your child? Rosa, my darling, think what a treasure Heaven has sent you, to love and care for.’

‘ Yes,’ said she, trembling, ‘ Heaven has been good to me; I hope Heaven will always be as good to me. I don’t deserve it; but then I tell God so. I am very grateful, and very penitent. I never forget that, if I had been a good wife, my husband—five weeks is a long time. Why do you tremble so? Why are you so pale—a strong man like you? Calamity! calamity! ’

Dr. Philip hung his head.

She looked at him, started wildly up, then sank back into her chair. So the stricken deer leaps, then falls. Yet even now she put on a deceitful calm, and said, ‘ Tell me the truth. I have a right to know.’

He stammered out, ‘ There is a report of an accident at sea.’

She kept silence.

‘ Of a passenger drowned—out of that ship.—This, coupled with his silence, fills our hearts with fear.’

‘ It is worse—you are breaking it to me—you have gone too far to stop. One word, is he alive? Oh, say he is alive! ’

Philip rang the bell hard, and said in a troubled voice, 'Rosa, think of your child.'

'Not when my husband—is he alive, or dead?'

'It is hard to say, with such a terrible report about, and no letters,' faltered the old man, his courage failing him.

'What are you afraid of? Do you think I can't die, and go to him? Alive, or dead?' and she stood before him, raging and quivering in every limb.

The nurse came in.

'Fetch her child,' he cried; 'God have mercy on her.'

'Ah, then he is dead,' said she, with stony calmness. 'I drove him to sea, and he is dead.'

The nurse rushed in, and held the child to her.

She would not look at it.

'Dead!'

'Yes, our poor Christie is gone—but his child is here—the image of him. Do not forget the mother. Have pity on his child and yours.'

'Take it out of my sight!' she screamed. 'Away with it, or I shall murder it, as I have murdered its father. My dear Christie, before all that live! I have killed him. I shall die for him. I shall go to him.' She raved and tore her hair. Servants rushed in. Rosa was carried to her bed, screaming and raving, and her black hair all down on both sides, a piteous sight.

Swoon followed swoon, and that very night brain fever set in with all its sad accompaniments; a poor bereaved creature, tossing and moaning; pale, anxious, but resolute faces of the nurse and the kitchen-maid watching: on one table a pail of ice, and on another the long, thick raven hair of our poor Simpleton, lying on clean silver paper. Dr. Philip had cut it all off with his own hand, and he was now folding it up, and crying over it; for he thought to himself, 'Perhaps in a few days more only this will be left of her on earth.'

(To be continued.)

A SPRING FLOWER SONG.

SPRING has come and Winter over—all the land is robed in green,
Up the hill-side see the orchards in their pink and snowy sheen;
Richly fragrant, purple-tinted, grow the lilacs down below,
With the bright laburnum blossoms drooping in a golden glow.

Hark! the birds with joy are singing in the may-trees thick with flowers—
Happy birds, your songs are not regretful strains for fleeting hours;
In the wood the dappled sunlight plays upon an azure ground—
Azure, for the hyacinths in sweet profusion smile around.

Deep within a glade of shadow, by a rill that ripples there,
Long green leaves in clusters growing—lilies of the vale they bear;
In the lanes, above the hedges, scented wild acacia falls,
Clumps of iris in the sunshine glisten on the castle walls.

Yellow cowslips prank the meadows, celandine and daffodils,
Ruby-red anemones are glinting through the grassy frills;
On the banks the primrose lingers, and the dainty violet,
Pearly daisies, leafy mazes—surely Spring hath Summer met!

E. D. T.

LEAVES BY A LISTENER.

IN THE STUDIOS.

WHETHER he be seen in the field or in the studio, the privilege of taking a peep over an artist's shoulder whilst he is at work at his easel, is always so eagerly sought that there is nothing remarkable in the growing habit of giving some account of forthcoming pictures on the eve of the exhibition of the Royal Academy, nor is there anything objectionable in it, so long as criticism is avoided. It is manifestly unjust, and a presumptuous piece of bad taste, to pass adverse opinions upon more or less incomplete works before they meet the public eye, and so create perhaps an unfavourable prejudice.

Unseemly, and unseasonable too, does it also appear to present such accounts months before the real picture-tide of the London world begins; they are utterly forgotten by May, if published in November, and they often have the disadvantage of giving minute descriptions of subjects which have not even been commenced.

By that ominous period, however, the 1st of April, the actual day, save the mark, on which, this year, outsiders must send in their works for exhibition at the Royal Academy, 'echoes from the easels,' should be pretty reliable. If those which I, a mere listener, repeat are not, and I make a mistake, the date is surely ample excuse, and I must plead too deep a draught of pigeon's milk, or too heavy a breakfast on eggs discovered in the mare's nest.

Not using the expression vulgarly, I think I may, nevertheless, assert that there will be 'no mistake' about Mr. Millais' child

picture of 1873. Since the days of 'My First Sermon,' he has done nothing so interesting or powerful in this particular line of child-portraiture. A life-sized girl Toddlekins, of four or five, with a little mob cap knowingly popped on the top of her head, seated on the grass in a shrubbery playing with a black kitten, is a theme we can understand in a moment, as being thoroughly congenial to the artist; and it is not uninteresting to hear that the child is the same who figured as a baby in his picture of the 'Inundation,' three years ago. It is a happiness to have this assurance, that the jolly little infant, then also attended by a feline companion, and smiling complacently as she lay in her cradle afloat upon a world of waters, was rescued, and to see her again appearing in such pretty guise from under her father's cunning hand, for the sitter (or squatter) is the youngest Miss Millais. The owner of 'The Inundation' has very wisely secured this second picture of the little lady and her cat; and in his rare collection of modern art it will form, in conjunction with its predecessor, quite a history of her early acquaintance with the studio.

From infancy to old age, Mr. Millais makes but one bound, and a startling contrast to the little girl and the cat is the portrait of an old lady and her parrot. Full, soft, dimpled, rosy cheeks, and flowing locks, and then, parchment skin, deep wrinkles and furrows, hollow eyes, and, be it said without any disrespect, a most palpable 'front.' Such a marvel-

lous piece of handiwork, such execution, such jugglery of colour, with such profound dexterity, say the wise ones, have not been seen for many a day, as in the picture of this ancient dame, aged ninety-three. Velasquez, Holbein, Sir Joshua, and Gainsborough put together, like none, like all, and yet most like Millais. Intermediate steps in life between these two extremes are also to be found amongst his other contributions, including a portrait of a portly woman in her prime, Madame Bischoffsheim, and another, three-quarter length, of the eldest Miss Millais, basket on arm, egg-hunting in the hen-house of an old English farm. Were it not that he would be accused of taking too good care of himself, one could wish that Mr. Millais, in his capacity this year of hanger, would so place these various stages of life's history that they might be seen, as it were, in a sort of natural sequence; for, whether he has intended it or not, he has produced a coherent series of pictures, which, as the four ages of woman, might be classed in painting, as are in poetry Shakespeare's seven ages of man. A portrait of Sir W. S. Bennett, and, possibly, one of Lord Selborne, will be also amongst the finest products of his genius.

Settling apparently now pretty steadily down to the line of art in which of late years he has achieved his greatest successes, Mr. Millais gives no sign at this present writing, of any subject picture, and not even of a landscape. Portraiture, I am told, unquestionably has had no equal master in England, but, had I a thought that I could call my own, it would make me regret the absence of kindred canvases to the 'Huguenot,' the 'Order of Release,' the 'Vale of Rest,' &c.

To say that Mr. George Leslie
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has painted a large triptych of graceful and beautiful girls in classic attire, is to assure all listeners of a charming result. It signifies very little what the dear creatures may be doing, telling fortunes with flowers, decorating one another with wreaths, reclining on mossy banks, or reciting legends of romance, they will certainly possess all those attractions which the public know so well, and love so dearly when rendered by this most accomplished painter of feminine beauty.

In the present instance, a long low wall running through the three pictures, a flight of steps at either side ascending to a background of arbutus shrubs, and a bronze lion's head in the centre, spouting a jet of water, makes, in theatrical phrase, 'the set.' At this fountain two lovely Leslieans are in busy idleness, one dabbling her lily hand in the limpid thread, the other making believe to utilise a pitcher, whilst a magpie impertinently struts in the immediate foreground. Coming down the steps on the right, a third beauty with a kitten in her arms, and the mother cat 'pointing' dead at the magpie, centres the attention on that side; and, on the other, a fourth girl of the 'sweet eighteen' period playing a pipe, and a younger of about nine, are grouped upon the second flight of steps. Each division of the triptych, a complete tableau in itself, and the three combined even more complete: a story of Arcadia, or what you will; with harmonious details of lute and flute, and all the rest of what is sweet and fair. Mr. Leslie avoids the introduction of a male element into his subjects, just as Mr. Hodgson does the female into his, and so the balance is struck for the benefit of those commercial, ledger-y sort of critics, who are always apparently want-

ing to see an artist commit himself by painting things he is unskilled in. These censors, however, I am glad to be told, have failed to hurry Mr. Hodgson to his doom, and so his 'Eastern questions' are settled by the almost complete absence of the *hourî* complication. How much is to be done, at least on canvas, without having recourse to this supposedly inevitable source of difficulty, Mr. Hodgson shows, and one may forget that there is such a thing as a woman in the world, whilst looking at his jovial British tar swaggering into a courtyard amongst a lot of armed and sleeping Arabs. The contrast of expression and character in this, his most important work, and the conscientious painting thereof, amply compensate for the absence of any of that beauty which the adverse critics aforesaid will doubtless revert to, and make good capital of. They will look for it in vain, too, in his 'Birds'-skins and curiosity seller,' and in his obnoxious 'Street musicians,' finding in its omission a plea for their annual attack upon the Academy's doings and electings. Listening taught me a year ago to prophesy speedy elevation to academic honours for Mr. Hodgson, and now that he has received them, he appears determined to more than justify their award.

Whispers reach me in such fitful ways from the studios, that the veteran and the tiro, the academician and the outsider, present themselves to my pen in no direct order; thus, from one of the newest elected, I jump to one who 'took honours' long ago. That Mr. E. M. Ward's picture can be other than historical, is improbable; that the theme can be other than French, unlikely; and that the treatment can be other than intensely dramatic and powerful, impossible. So my ears received,

without surprise, the announcement that he has achieved an enormous success in portraying the incident of Charles the Ninth and Catherine de Médicis visiting Admiral Coligny, after he had been wounded by the assassin whom royalty itself had employed to strike down the great leader of the Huguenot party. The interview is going on between the king and the admiral at the bedside on the left; the queen watches it suspiciously from a little farther off, scarcely paying any attention to the hints which her companion, the Duc d'Anjou, is giving of the ominous movement amongst the crowd of Huguenot retainers in the background; whilst Coligny's daughter and her husband, Teligny, look on anxiously, and form the interest of the right-hand side of the canvas.

The details of this great dramatic situation are so rich and full, that I could cover my allotted leaves, and more, with their description; the briefest outline, therefore, is all I dare allow myself, if I would tell a tenth part of what has reached me this year from the great limning fraternity. I must say no more of the husband, whilst the wife awaits mention.

Prediction and assumption are my province, not opinion; hence I assume that Mrs. E. M. Ward has made a tremendous advance in her present picture, and I predict for her great additional renown through it. We have the poet Chatterton as a boy of twelve or thirteen, interrupted by his foster-mother, Mrs. Edkins, in one of his first examinations and imitations of the famous manuscript Rowley poems. With his blue coat, and muffin cap (the badge, which he hated, of Colston's Bristol Blue-coat school) contemptuously flung upon the floor,

he resents the woman's presence by an indignant gesture, half-attempting to hide with his foot one manuscript amongst the many littered about the old lumber-garret in which he has obtained permission to amuse himself. His wild and wayward nature induced the suspicion in his mother's mind, that he had retired there to colour his skin with some ochre and blacking, with a view to joining a tribe of gipsies, and she thus comes upon his real purpose, though, of course, scarcely understanding it. With this, as with Mr. Ward's work, an ample description of the expression, the power, the rich detail, could only be given at great length, so I am obliged to stop my ears as accounts of it pour in upon them, and proceed to—well! the name of Ward suggests that of Frith, and *vice versa*. What concatenation of ideas it is that associates them, I know not, but so it is; and I am informed that the last-named popular painter will rather reserve his strength for one of his tremendous *coupés* next year, than be very strongly represented this. That he has in contemplation a subject so admirably suited to his genius, that it will eclipse in artistic, picturesque, and popular interest all his previous great efforts, not excepting the 'Rams-gate Sands,' the 'Derby Day,' the 'Railway Station,' and the 'Charles the Second,' is no secret; but what the subject is, it would, in these unscrupulous, piratical times, be most unfair to reveal. It has reached my ears, but wild horses, tigers' claws, or (as the facetious riddle associates the two) the 'damnation clause' of the Athanasian Creed itself, shall not tear it from me. Whether other purveyors of art gossip will be equally considerate and reticent during the next twelve months is

doubtful; but I cannot refrain from condemning any anticipatory remarks or revelations; and it is to be regretted, for Mr. Frith's sake, that his great subject has oozed out at all. A year hence, the readers of 'London Society' may have a chance of knowing more about it from my pen, and surely the news will then be more seasonable than at present; meanwhile, Mr. Frith will not be absent by any means from the Academy walls; a certain sweet flower-girl, and a domestic billiard-table episode, will display some of his most coveted qualities for this immediate 1873. And speaking of 'claws' reminds me that Mr. Heywood Hardy is a claimant of no mean pretensions for honours in the picture he is sending to Burlington House. A battle between lions, the beasts being larger than life, for the possession of a lioness cowering in the background, should be a conspicuous and stirring incident; and when the skill is remembered which this artist has displayed in his previous essays, there can be little doubt of a triumph for him now. Animal painting is in the ascendant, as shown by the progress of Mr. Briton Riviere, and by the election of Mr. Davis, another of the very fitly lately chosen associates.

Realistic allegory is the vein in which Mr. Marcus Stone has been working for the delight of his countless admirers. 'Le Roi est mort, Vive le Roi!' The king, be it observed, not any particular king, but *the* king; a page of history, nay, a volume, or a Liebig-like extract of it, is here spread out upon a very large canvas; and there is to be seen the just defunct monarch, who, having long outlived all those who loved him, dies unregretted, save by a faithful hound, and even he is restrained

from an over-demonstration of his grief, by an attendant page. The curtains are being drawn round the bed, whilst the statesman, the warrior, the priest, and all the dignitaries that surround a throne, offer the crown to a baby-boy, who, quitting his orange with regret, clings to the skirts of his *gouvernante*, and looks timorously at the symbols of sovereignty as though a juvenile prescience of the responsibilities they entail was already half asserting itself. With the middle of the fifteenth century for his period, Mr. Stone is enabled to display his accurate knowledge of picturesque costume, and to produce in conjunction with force of expression a depth and harmony of colour which I have heard styled as incalculably beyond anything he has yet done. Not the slightest opportunity which elaboration of detail offers is lost in pressing home the moral of his theme, and few listeners could listen to the praise which has reached me about it, without predicting for its painter a speedy attainment of the coveted academic initials.

The 'Bridal party' has been kept waiting by Mr. Yeames for a whole year; and, as I described it in the March number of 1872, I need only refer the subscribers to 'London Society' to my 'Leaves' of that date, adding that it is not likely to have lost by twelve months' further consideration in the studio.

Very unlikely would it have been, if the praise bestowed upon 'A Bookworm,' two years ago, had not stimulated Mr. Stacey Marks to further exertions in the same dusty field. The 'Ornithologist' seems to justify him in giving another example of the wondrous ability he possesses in the grouping and painting of still life. I fancy I hear Mr. Marks

being accused by some of those free-tongued cavillers at everything exhibited at Burlington House, of, as they phrase it, repeating himself; an excellent and cheap formula of condemnation, which constantly reaches my ears in picture galleries; but, if there be any meaning in it, I predict most people will be glad that he does so, when they see the old gentleman and his servant arranging, and dusting, and setting in order the stuffed specimens which adorn the studio museum of the 'Ornithologist.'

'St. Francis preaching to the birds' was a sufficient evidence of Mr. Marks's acquaintance with natural history, and when he painted that subject, the life-like motion, and palpably listening aspect of the feathered congregation, were the means by which he produced the character and fun of the theme. In the present picture, it is the very unmistakable motionless, *stuffed* look that the birds have which becomes the vehicle for the artist's quaint humour and power of portraying telling incident. Every conceivable advantage is taken of odd position, queer expression, and accidental combination, to present a series of episodes irresistibly droll. As an instance, I may cite the *owl-y* look which the old gentleman himself, in his still more *owl-y* spectacles, possesses, even as he handles a specimen of the 'obscure bird' itself. Promise has been made by Mr. Marks, for two years and more, of a picture quaintly funny and characteristic of a mediæval haberdasher inducing a lady to 'go in' for a steeple-crowned head-dress, a description of which picture I gave in the March number of 'London Society' for 1871; but it is not even yet ready. It is one of those pictures which get set aside from

time to time for other work, which the artist feels keener about; yet it will come, doubtless, before the public sooner or later, and be none the worse for the delay. In the second picture which, however, we are sure to have from the hand of Mr. Marks, a glimpse of a mediæval town on a broad, flowing river, supplies a background to a series of backs in the foreground; that is to say, to a group of people in mediæval attire, turning their backs to the spectator, and looking over the parapet of a bridge. The natural inquiry which rises to the lips when such an incident is witnessed in any age, is, 'What is it?' and equally naturally such is the title which this very original work is to bear. The object cannot be seen, but is evidently something floating in the water, which highly excites the curiosity of the *dramatis personæ*, and of course the same feeling is engendered in any one looking at the picture itself.

Dead emperors and wandering heirs have interfered with the completion of Mr. Fildes' intended picture, and so he rests upon the oars of his last year's 'Water-party,' and only continues to paddle gently among the reeds, lilies, and willows, with a sort of smaller edition of his first success in oil. Let not the sapient critics denounce him for this, however, as a man of one idea, or cut a bad joke, by intimating that the 'whilome' hewer of wood has only developed into a drawer of water: let them wait twelve months, and then they may see how wide is the range of his powers.

Mr. J. B. Burgess has crossed from his pet peninsula to break ground in another continent. He has found at Tangier, beyond the Straits of Hercules, a congenial subject—a Moorish fountain at

sundown, during the feast of the Ramazan, when, through the live-long day, neither food nor drink will pass the good Moslem's lips. Though the light is waning, it is easy to see how hot the sun has been, and the haste of the hurrying figures proves how inveterate a thirst is upon these conscientious fanatics after their long abstinence.

The 'Dragon of Wantley' is the fit fellow-subject Mr. Poynter now gives us to his 'Perseus' of 1872, on a canvas of the same shape and dimensions, intended to occupy a corresponding space in Lord Wharncliffe's mansion. A terrible beast is this mediæval monster, and our Slade professor has probably not allowed his professorial functions, or his church-fresco painting, to interfere with the due consideration of every detail which can enhance its dread aspect.

Lest the preconceived idea of a picture from a description should interfere with the impression which the sight of the actual picture itself is intended to create, not a few artists deny all access to their studios, stuffing the key-holes and crevices with cotton-wool, lest a whisper of their doings should reach the inquisitive ears of mere listeners like myself. Thus, but little is ever known of Mr. Hook's work until it is glittering in all the brilliancy of its out-door strength upon the Academy walls. Beyond the fact, therefore, that he has been to the Shetland Isles for his sea-scapes, and that he has drawn upon the resources of his own domain in Hampshire for a most beautiful landscape, I have nothing to tell of him, and I doubt if anybody else has. Another instance of the way artists' names get coupled, is to be found in Messrs. Orchardson and Pettie, and the former is expected to be

unusually great. A Juno-like creature passing through a wild wood, accompanied by a huge mastiff or bloodhound, and the two half-startled and half-stopping at some unexpected sound, is said to be as fine an example of this master as he has ever favoured us with; the sentiment of the whole is grand. The wealth of luxuriant, tangled vegetation, notably seen in a matted mass of big sunflowers, and the wealth of feminine and canine glory, are quite exceptional.

A damsel fleeing from some imminent danger, and rushing through an iron gateway to take sanctuary with three black-stoled nuns, is a dramatically pictorial incident, which, but to mention, is to call up the name of Pettie. Who does not conceive its treatment at his hands? or of his other subject, when I tell that it is a party leaving a beleaguered city with a flag of truce?

Goss Quillet, Esq., one of the many garrulous friends to whom I am indebted for much that I hear in the picture world, and who has been looking over my leaves thus far, breaks out into a 'Bless my heart, why don't you describe these pictures minutely? they are worth any consideration, I can tell you all about them;' but when I remind him of the mass of artists of whose works I am not even able, for want of space, to give a hint, he admits and regrets, and then says, 'But mind you don't forget a word for Calderon's modern, if not novel subject, of a mother, in gorgeous evening array, bidding "Good night" to her baby-boy in his crib. He compensates for this expenditure of his powers on a somewhat commonplace theme, by also giving us an example after his own old best fashion, a scene on the battlements of a fortification, with women and children looking

on at some desperate engagement. This is a sort of serious reverse of Mr. Marks's picture; in neither do we see the object at which the people are looking; but you will easily understand what a fine opportunity Mr. Calderon has in such a subject for the display of his greatest powers. But subject, after all, you know, is not so much what the artists look to, as quality, tone, treatment, and so forth; it is only the ordinary public who are curious about the subject, the story, as it were: this, in fact, is what they first look to when a picture is set before them, and it is wrong, decidedly wrong; it indicates a want of feeling for true art. On the other hand, there is just a little affectation sometimes in the way certain painters pretend to ignore it, for, after all, art is capable of telling us much that is untellable by other means, and ought not to be considered as a merely decorative institution.

'Leighton, you know,' continues my voluble instructor, 'is so busy with the second of his Lunette decorations for South Kensington (he has finished the *war* subject, and is now at the *peace*), that he won't have much this year; a juggler, a nude female figure, throwing balls high into the air, and watching them, will be about all, I believe; and Val Prinsep's land and sea-scape, which he adapts to the subject of the possessed herd of swine, is likely, from its originality, to attract attention.'

Then Quillet tells of Alma-Tadéma and the foreign element, and whilst he is doing so, the printer's boy calls for copy, and I am obliged to stop my ears to the thousand and one additional stories of the studios which Quillet has on the tip of his tongue.

TWO YEARS SINCE !

A Story of the Last War.

'YOU'LL go through Belgium, find your way to Cologne, and work quietly round to Strasbourg. Mind, we are French, and if you can give the Germans a rub without overstepping the bounds of veracity, don't hesitate to pitch into them.'

The time, the autumn of 1870; the place, the editor's room of a certain London daily newspaper; the actors, the chief of the said London daily newspaper, and myself.

'I had been knocking about town for some time without finding employment. To tell the truth, I was a little bit depressed, as I had just assisted at the demise of a literary venture of my own inauguration. For months I had struggled with printers and paper-makers, engravers and publishers, and last, but not least, my own sanguine hopes. I had tried very hard to prove to my own satisfaction that a pound contained more than twenty shillings, and a shilling more than a dozen pence; but the end, long delayed, had come at last. My contributors had bidden me a sorrowful farewell; my editorial sanctum knew me no longer; the shutters of the office were up, and a placard affixed to the front door announced to those it might concern that the place was once more 'to let.' One day I was walking moodily down the Strand, thinking sorrowfully of the past glories of my late paper, 'The Phoenix,' and conjecturing whether it ever would be worthy of its name, and rise once more, when I was startled out of my reverie by the pain of a rather hard blow on the shoulder, and the sound of a very hearty

voice in my ear. I turned round quickly and found a smiling face at my elbow.

'What! you don't know me, old fellow?'

I stared at my questioner, and for the moment certainly found it difficult to recognise him. He was roughly clad in very warm clothing, wore a billy-cock hat, and possessed a beard of Crimean proportions; at length it dawned upon me that the stranger was a very dear old friend of mine—one with whom I had not come in contact since I had left school, some ten years before. I took him by the hand and cried, 'What! Charley Scrubey! is it you, or your ghost?'

'It is certainly not my ghost,' said my new-found acquaintance, 'although lately I have been more than once in a position to permit of my spirit winging its wondrous flight.'

'What do you mean?'

'Simply this,' replied Scrubey, 'I have been travelling in France with the Francs-tireurs, gentlemen who, had they nothing better to shoot, would derive considerable amusement by potting at their grandmothers. I'm a "Special Correspondent," old man—what do you think of that? But, come, you don't look very cheerful; what are you going to do to-night?'

'Nothing,' said I, 'unless I take a walk on Waterloo Bridge, to have a look at the river by gas-light.'

'That's rather an unhealthy recreation at this time of the year. If you have nothing better to do, come and dine with me. I will take no refusal. So mind you are

at the Columbus by seven o'clock sharp.'

Finding, on examination, that I had nothing better to do, I dressed myself in the regulation suit of black and joined Scrubey at his club at the hour he had specified. I fear he must have found me very bad company, for, after the claret and biscuits had been put upon the table, he pressed me to tell him what was bothering me, and, as a reward for his sympathy, was entertained with the doleful story of the failure of '*The Phoenix*'.

He listened attentively, and when I paused at the conclusion of my narrative, turned towards me and said, 'Well, old boy, I'm sorry to hear this; but the longest lane has a turning. A very original remark, I'm aware, but not without consolation. What do you intend to do next?'

'I haven't the faintest idea; perhaps criticise third-rate poetry, and poison myself that way; or take a theatre, and ruin myself finally in a fortnight; or jump from London Bridge into the Thames.'

'Nonsense,' said Scrubey; 'this will never do. Behave like a man, and look misfortune in the face. Halloa! a brilliant notion. Why not become one of us?'

'One of you?'

'Yes. Join the band of noble special correspondents: the men who risk their lives in the service of the great British Public; who seek the bubble reputation in the cannon's mouth, and who supply Messrs. Brown, Jones, and Robinson at breakfast with the only known rival to the penny roll, an authentic letter from the seat of war. For further particulars, see the leaders in "*The Daily Telegraph*." Well, old man, the idea is worth something—what do you say to it?'

I pondered for a minute, and

then answered, with much deliberation, 'If I can, I will.'

This reply seemed to give Scrubey great satisfaction, and he forthwith commenced an elaborate dissertation upon the art of obtaining 'special' appointments. He showed me conclusively that a man of determination, with some literary ability, could easily obtain one, and offered to give me a letter of introduction to the editor of the '*London Daily Mercury*' (as I shall, with your permission, call the newspaper that secured my services). In fact he straightened the way and cleared the road for my self-banishment from England. That very evening my credentials to my future chief were handed over to me, and I determined upon presenting them the next morning. Scrubey separated from me with a hearty shake of the hand.

'With your reputation, old fellow, for fearless writing and just criticism [this was a soothing compliment to console me for my latest failure], you are sure to get the post. I don't know where they'll send you, but if you should be despatched to Paris, I shall be happy to welcome you to a banquet consisting of hashed rats, and a bottle of the very best Burgundy.'

Thanking Scrubey for his proffered hospitality, I put on my Ulster coat, lighted a cigar, and left the club. The next morning I called at the office of the '*London Daily Mercury*' and found the editor willing, nay anxious, to add me to his staff. It happened that a 'special' was needed for the German army before Strasbourg, and I was at once selected for the post. The first paragraph of this article gives a summary of my instructions. I was to proceed to my duties immediately after providing myself with the necessary outfit. The editor, in wishing me 'bon voyage,' im-

"TWO YEARS SINCE."

Drawn by T. Jeffcock.



pressed upon me the necessity of keeping my connection with his paper a secret. ‘The Germans hate us like poison,’ he said, as I shook hands with him for the last time, ‘so pray be careful, my dear fellow; and, above all things, don’t get shot.’

So it came about that I found myself on board the ‘Baron Ozy’ steamboat one rainy Sunday morning, bound for Antwerp *en route* for the seat of war. I will pass over the adventures of my journey in silence. It is now more than two years since they were published in the ‘London Mercury,’ and I will hope that they were read as they appeared. It was rather a hard task sometimes to turn out the column of amusing chit-chat demanded by the editor for his readers. I had been told off to furnish ‘light matter,’ to serve, I suppose, as a foil to the serious articles upon the many dreadful battles that made the year 1871 one of the darkest pages in the history of the world. Be that as it may, ‘comic copy’ had to be concocted, and the necessary columns were forthcoming in spite of the pain the task caused to me. For six weeks I did not see a fellow-countryman, and passed Christmas Day in a hospital full of fever-stricken soldiers. Ah! it was a dreadful time, and the ‘specials’ suffered nearly as badly as the combatants. We carried our lives in our hands, and had to fear hostile bullets from ‘the enemy’ and arrest from ‘our friends.’ I was several times seized upon as a spy—now in France as a German doctor: now in Germany as a French officer attempting to break his parole. But, there, it is over now, and my adventures supply me with many a good joke with which to ‘set the table on a roar.’

It matters little how I got into Strasbourg. Were I writing the

story of my life, I might occupy pages with an account of my experiences. I think I should head the chapter containing the narrative, ‘Breaking the Blockade,’ for that was the operation I performed; but, as I have a different story to tell, I content myself with the simple statement that I escaped from the clutches of the German sentries, that I passed the French outposts, and that I found myself in the city. People living in England a hum-drum, uneventful life can scarcely realise the wretchedness of a beleaguered town. Public buildings bombarded, churches razed to the ground, hospitals in flames, and streets upon streets mere masses of ruins. The Germans, anxious to get to Paris, were becoming brutal. Their guns were laid at the poor quarters in the hope of burning out the lower classes and causing a revolt. It was pitiful to see the crowd of starving people who bivouacked in the public places. Whole families lay together in heaps in the last stages of disease, in the last agonies of famine; the more wealthy inhabitants, abandoning the upper apartments of their houses, had taken refuge from the fast-falling shells in the cellars and kitchens. Terror and misery reigned supreme; as I looked around me I could not help exclaiming, ‘And this is war—glorious war!’

‘Good morning, sir.’

I was startled by a voice that seemed familiar to me, and yet I could not say where I had heard its tones before.

‘You don’t remember me! Ah! sir, I have changed very much since we last met.’

The speaker was a French workman, wearing the blouse of his class—a man with a young face lined and seared by sorrow and disease. He wore a moustache

and beard, and had heavy shaggy eyebrows. I looked at him fixedly, and yet could not bring to my recollection where I had seen him before.

'I had the honour of serving you, sir, when I was in the employ of Mr. —,' and he mentioned the name of a well-known London tradesman. Then it flashed upon me that I had known the man before me as a lad—a careless, merry lad. I suppose my face was a traitor to my thoughts.

'You find Paul Girard changed,' he said, with a sorrowful smile. 'It's only six years ago that I was in London, and yet I have lived a long, long life since then.'

Certainly he was changed. I had known him a bright, joyous boy, and now he seemed to be a man old and grey before his time. As we spoke, a hissing shell fell near us. He seized me by the arm and pulled me behind a wall, just in time to escape the shower of iron that followed upon a loud explosion.

'Come with me,' he said, and led the way down a narrow street in which appeared ugly gaps where houses had fallen in, or gardens had been covered with shattered masonry. Mechanically I obeyed him, and soon we approached some wooden planks let into the pavement. When we reached this spot he stooped down, and taking an iron ring between his hands, exerted all his strength to lift what I now found was a trap-door leading to a cellar. He was some little time about his work.

'See, sir, how weak I am,' he cried. 'Ah! we have had a trying time since those pigs of Prussians surrounded us. At last!'

The door had yielded, and we then descended into a wretched room lighted by an oil lamp which made but the darkness visible.

A couple of chairs, a crucifix, the picture of a comely woman, a little straw, and that was all the place contained. I saw before me squalid poverty.

'I fear you must have suffered deeply.'

'We have all suffered. But that is not all. Do you see that picture, sir?'

'Yes.'

'Look at it well,' he cried, excitedly. 'Say is not the face fair enough? Can you read perfidy in those sweet blue eyes, cruelty in that gentle mouth? No, and yet I tell you that face has been a greater curse to me than the siege; that those eyes have reconciled me to death!'

'She is dead?'

'No; would that she had died before I learned that she was false! Then I could have prayed for her; but now!'

What could I do? The poor fellow was evidently killing himself by yielding to the fatal excitement that follows close upon a woman's deceit. I tried to comfort him, but my words faltered. I grew confused, and was silent.

'Ah! sir, if you did but know my sufferings, you would pity me. She was my life, my hope, my idol; and she has gone. Shall I ever see her again? Great Heaven, what have I done that my punishment should be so heavy, and so hard to bear?'

And he threw himself upon the straw in an agony of grief. By-and-by he grew more calm.

'You remember me in London, sir. I left suddenly, because I heard a rumour that she was false. I hurried away, came here, and found my suspicions well founded. She was married!'

'But that was many years ago,' I said.

'Yes; but those sort of wounds

never heal. You may lose a leg, or a hand, but when the heart is stabbed the blow is fatal.'

I rose to depart. He seized my hand, and detained me.

'Do not leave me, sir,' he cried. 'I am ill and lonely. I am afraid to be alone. When the house above us was cannonaded by those pigs, my poor sister died; and since her death I have seen no one here. I have crept out every other day to get some food—to receive my allowance.'

'But were not men wanted to man the walls?'

'I understand what you mean, sir,' he replied, with a flushed cheek. 'But, see here. I am no coward; I am a Frenchman.'

And then I noticed for the first time that Girard was wounded. What should I decide? I had made no friends in Strasbourg. When men are starving and fighting for the lives of the dear ones at home—for wives and children, it is no time for idle companionship. Charity and inclination counselled me to stay with Girard; and I once more resumed my seat.

'Thanks, sir,' the man said, gratefully. 'I cannot tell you the comfort an English face brings to me. Remember, when I lived in that land of fogs of yours I almost became one of your compatriots.'

'You are ill. Would not the Prussians allow you to go to Switzerland?'

'The Prussians! Ah! you cannot know them. When their cannon had battered down our houses, and the city was the home of a pestilence, the good Swiss asked permission to entertain our women and children, and were refused. But a day will come for France; and then—vengeance!'

As I sat before him my eyes unconsciously became fixed upon the picture. He followed my glance,

and became more and more excited.

'Ah, poor girl! poor girl! I can forgive her now. What are my sufferings compared to hers? You must know, sir, that she is not in the city.'

'Not in the city?' I exclaimed.

'No, her husband' (he hissed out the word), 'he was once a friend of mine—a friend! He rented a small house outside the walls. At the first sortie he was struck down wounded. They took him to his home, and left him there; and she is with him.'

'Have they any children?'

'Yes, two. Girls. Rose and Clotilde.'

As he spoke there was a heavy thud, and then a loud explosion.

'Another shell!' he cried. 'Curses upon the heartless wretches. Will they not let us die in peace?'

'Help!'

It was the sound of a girl's weak voice. He stood listening and trembling in every limb.

'Help, M. Girard! for the sake of Heaven, help!'

Mounting the steps that led to the street, he pushed up the trap-door, and a poor little creature hurried into the cellar.

'Her child!' said Girard. 'What, is it Rose?'

The poor little girl could scarcely speak for terror. She cowered down before him, and began to cry. I took her in my arms, and tried to comfort her.

'What is it, Rose?' repeated Girard, when the girl had grown more composed under the influence of my soothing words.

And then came a long, rambling story. The child had been sent by her mother to the city to carry a letter to Girard. The family were literally starving. The husband was dying of a dreadful disease, and the wife was waiting upon him. The only available

messenger was the poor little trembling creature resting within my arms.

'Oh! M. Girard, do help us!' she cried. 'We are so miserable. Clotilde is ill with fever, like papa. Do help us. Oh, do help us!'

She repeated the sentence a score of times; and then we learned how the child, under the darkness of night, had made her way into the city, regardless of shells and bullets from friends and foes.

'Read this,' said Girard, and he handed to me a tear-stained letter.

'You once loved me. We are in sore distress—so sore that I even write to you. Have pity upon us, for the sake of Heaven. Rose will tell you all. Save us.'

'EUGÉNIE.'

That was all.

'What shall I do?'

'Do, Girard?' I replied. 'Why, behave like a man—a Christian.'

I held out my hand; he took it within his own, and pressed it. Then he brushed away the tears that had gathered in his eyes, and said:

'I understand you, sir. I will go to them this minute.'

'And I will accompany you.'

It was now his turn to seek for my hand. The compact was ratified without a word on either side: two men had determined to risk their lives for the sake of a woman. We told the child to follow us, put on thick overcoats, and sallied forth. My purse soon supplied the necessaries for filling a large basket with comestibles.

Carrying the load between us, we proceeded to one of the gates of the city, and attempted to pass out. As Girard was the weaker of the two, I took charge of the child.

'Where are you going?' cried

a surly *moblot*, bringing his rifle to the 'charge.'

'On a mission of mercy, good sir,' said Girard. 'A poor family is starving outside the walls, and—'

'You can't pass here.'

'But I am an Englishman—a journalist,' said I, producing my credentials.

'You can't pass.'

And we found that he was right. Do what we would, say what we could, egress was everywhere refused us.

'We must run the sentries,' whispered Girard. 'I have a rope. We can easily attach it to a tree on the ramparts, and drop into the ditch below.'

It seemed hopeless to attempt to obtain the sanction of the authorities to our departure; so I consented to adopt his plan. We crept on to the ramparts, and, choosing a point badly guarded, dropped, by means of Girard's rope, into the plain outside the walls. During our descent I carried the child on my arm. We were not seen, and soon arrived at the ruins of a building that had once been a cottage.

Under a shed constructed of woodwork (the remains, probably, of the framework of a door) lay a man, evidently dying; near him was a woman, who, even now, in this hour of misery, possessed a pleasing face—a face that once must have been beautiful. The woman sprang up as she saw us skirting the wall, and uttered a cry.

'At last—you have come. I knew you would; and my prayers are answered.'

'Yes, Eugénie, I have come.'

A blush spread over her thin, pale face as she listened to him.

'Oh, Paul!'

'Not a word, Eugénie. I am here to help you, not to blame. What can I do?'

She pointed to the dying man.
‘He has tasted nothing for two days. He is sinking from exhaustion.’

We took the food out of the basket, and, mixing a little cognac and water in a glass, approached the dying man.

‘Here, Girard.’

My companion knelt down beside his rival, and raised the glass to his lips. The man opened his eyes, and stared into Girard’s face.

‘You here?’

‘Drink.’

‘You here! What are you doing here? Is this death? Is this my punishment?’

‘Drink.’

‘Never will I take anything from your hands. Eugénie, drive him from me. Where is Eugénie? Do you hear, Eugénie?’

I stooped down beside him, and was about to add my entreaties, when the shed was filled with flame and smoke. A sharp pain, a feeling of utter helplessness and oblivion.

When I regained my conscious-

ness I was in a German field hospital. I recovered slowly from my wound. When I was well enough to converse with the doctor who attended, I asked where I had been found.

‘In a shed near the cemetery. We thought you were dead at first, for you were struck by the shell that killed your friends.’

‘My friends?’

‘Yes. We found you lying beside the bodies of a woman and her children, and two men. We buried them, poor creatures, in one grave.’

And so my story ends. Shortly afterwards I was allowed to leave the German army *en route* for England, and soon reached London, where I received the congratulations of my friends. For nine days I was ‘a lion.’ It is two years since, and yet even now I think that the distinction I enjoyed was dearly bought. Ah! there is a terrible meaning to me in those simple words—‘Two years since!’

ARTHUR A. BECKETT.

CARDS OF INVITATION,

BY THOSE WHO HAVE ACCEPTED THEM.

IV.—BREAKFAST WITH GLADSTONE.

I CERTAINLY was a little excited on my return to town, after a two months' sojourn with my aunt in the Lake District, this winter. There are a few days in the year—say half-a-dozen—when the neighbourhood of Windermere is extremely charming, but usually it becomes depressing after a fortnight's intimacy; this winter it was unusually depressing, and I do not hesitate to say that, in spite of my aunt's society—I don't count my uncle—my spirits towards the end of January fell as startlingly as the barometer did, and occasionally I contemplated the plethoric waters of the lake in a manner which would perhaps have induced the local police to keep an eye upon me, if they had happened to observe me. And, consequently, and not unnaturally, I was a little excited when I found myself once more in London, the first week in February, the commencement of the Parliamentary Session being close at hand. When I say *excited*, pray don't misunderstand me: I don't mean what you mean. It wasn't the dry Sillery, or anything of that sort; it wasn't even the early salmon. No, it was merely my sensations arising from being once more among the busy haunts of men, and from my eager anticipations of the approaching legislative campaign. Not that I am a member of Parliament—very much by no means so. We lodgers no doubt enjoy the glorious privilege of the franchise, but no Reform Bill has yet been introduced which gives us an opportunity of contesting a vacant seat,

for the simple reason that the vast majority of us do not happen to possess five thousand a year, or thereabouts. When my scheme comes to be considered, when the theories I have advanced among my appreciative and admiring friends, as to the payment by the State of all legitimate electioneering expenses—but I won't anticipate a letter which I have already drafted for insertion in the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' and which I am sure the courteous and amiable editor of that excellent journal will unhesitatingly admit. When that letter, I say, is published, there will probably be considerable sensation in Cabinet councils, and possibly the next Conservative administration will base the new Reform Bill it is certain to introduce, upon my tersely, but eloquently, expressed arguments.

For politics are my delight. If my health had permitted it, there was nothing that I more ardently desired than to become a pupil of the celebrated Mr. T—, and pass my time in drawing Bills for Parliament. There is nothing I like so much as a Preamble; that reminds me I must be brief in getting to the subject on hand—a short and accurate account of how I enjoyed an early meal with the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone. It came to pass in this wise: one very disagreeable day I passed my time entirely at the club: I surrendered myself wholly to the perusal of newspapers, magazines, and quarterlies. The solemn and dignified 'Times,' the sprightly 'Telegraph,' the unwieldy 'Stand-

ard,' the highly respectable 'Morning Advertiser,' the aristocratic 'Post,' the shrill 'Echo,' the tainted — I should say *tinted*, 'Globe,' the monthly 'Fortnightly Review,' the 'Edinburgh,' and a considerable sprinkling of the smaller fry, and by dinner-time I felt that I was politics all over, and ready to argue any point with any man. In fact, I felt combative on every side—a state of mind I have often remarked in other people after much perusal of daily and periodical literature. Well, I dined with three or four kindred spirits, and it was not long before we began to endeavour to settle the affairs of the British nation. I do not think there was one moot-point for which we had not our several plans for adjustment: from Irish Education, down to Mr. Cowper-Temple's Public Worship Facilities Bill, and that is a long way. When I assure the reader that we never even so much as touched upon the Claimant, or discussed Contempt of Court, he will be satisfied that we never travelled beyond purely political questions. I cannot say that I accurately remember the various stages of our various controversies, it is sufficient to say that in answer to a derisive challenge from an opponent (an excellent person, but extremely wrong-headed), I retired into the writing-room, and wrote a letter to Mr. Gladstone, requesting permission to be received as a deputation from myself, in order that I might instruct him upon various points of Imperial and Domestic Policy. I sent the letter at once to the House of Commons per commissaire, in a Hansom cab, and rejoined my friends in the smoking-room. Somehow or other, they did not appear to welcome my return as eagerly as I should have expected; indeed, they seemed

rather bored when I again took up the subject where we had left off in the dining-room. I saw at once how it was, I had discomfited them one and all; so, after smoking a cigar and drinking a cup of coffee, I left the club, and returned to my lodgings with that sensation of triumph which the successful political controversialist can alone attain to.

I threw myself into the arm-chair, fixed my eyes upon the glowing coals, and wondered what would be the effect upon Mr. Gladstone produced by the letter which I had sent to him. Once or twice I reproached myself for my hasty conduct. Possibly he might be about to rise to make a great speech upon Irish University Education when the faithful Mr. Glyn would put my communication into his hands; he breaks the envelope; he unfolds the missive: his colour comes and goes; his bosom heaves; he smoothes the page hurriedly with open hand; he reads anxiously. I think, as I gaze into the coals (fifty shillings per ton), that all this reminds me strongly of the stage directions in a play. Well, is it odd? All the world is a stage—I fancy I have heard the remark before. Westminster is the particular theatre—great attraction—immense success of the sensational drama in unnumbered acts, entitled 'Human Life,' by the author of 'The Origin of Species.' Let me see, that was Adam. Hardly, though—Dr. Darwin has done away with Adam, and as for Eve—Ha! an idea! Possibly it was an Eve that made Dr. D. so unsatisfied with his lot, and induced him to draw out a scheme in opposition to that commonly ascribed to Moses. This notion requires consideration; I flatter myself it is an original one. To-morrow morning I will draft a letter to Mr.

Frank Buckland, or Mr. Voysey, or 'Bell's Life,' or some other authority, upon the subject. How funny the hot embers look! I see a queer face, the mouth whereof appears to be talking to me—the eyes wink—there is a shadow like a shirt collar over the cheek—it reminds me of Mr. Gladstone. Ha! humph!

I am aroused from the reverie into which I have fallen. Somebody comes into my room. I fancy he has knocked several times, but I am not sure. It is my landlord. This is odd—at one moment he appears unusually large, at the next preternaturally small. By the motion of his lips I can see that he is speaking to me, but I cannot hear a word. He places a letter upon the table and leaves the room. It is a large, official-looking letter; I open it, and read as follows:

'SIR—DEAR SIR—MY VERY DEAR SIR,—Yours just to hand. I have read it with overwhelming interest. Come and join me in breaking fast to-morrow at nine A.M. Need I ask you to bring your own salt? Yours very truly. I have no time for more, as the post is just going.

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

Ha! ha! Breakfast with Gladstone! Discuss calmly with that master mind my projects for ensuring the welfare of the world! Now, what will they say at the club, when I publish the results of my interview? I retire to my bed-room—sleep—wake—it is time to go to Carlton House Terrace.

What a thick fog there is as I sally forth into the street! I do not remember ever to have seen a thicker. It is as much as I can do to find my way along Pall Mall, and the great social palaces on the south side loom across my vision like architectural Alps; and, although it is nearly nine

o'clock, not a soul seems to be stirring. I grope my way in the murky darkness; I arrive at Carlton House Terrace, but somehow or other I cannot find the house. I am perpetually about to ring the bell at the wrong one. It all seems like a bad dream. Suddenly I find myself at the right one; I ring the bell, and the reverberation is like that of a dinner gong. The door opens—I enter; a tall and powdered menial awaits me.

'Is this Mr. Gladstone's?' I stammer.

'Of course it is,' the menial replies, blandly. 'Whose else could it be? All right. You're expected. Come on. You'll have muffins; I baked, buttered, and toasted them myself. Don't complain of them.'

Without another word, he signed to me to follow him up a broad staircase, and I did so. There were many stairs; I thought I never should have got to the top, and I could not help wondering why the Premier did not take his matutinal meal in the dining-room, which is usually to be found on the ground floor. I ventured to observe as much to my powdered conductor, and he replied, 'Stuff. Don't you know that some folks always like to be at the top of the tree? Here you are.'

As he spoke, he threw open a door with one hand, and with the other thrust me violently into the apartment, and before I had time to utter a word of remonstrance, he had disappeared, and the door was closed behind him.

In the centre of the room I saw a table spread for breakfast. At this table somebody was sitting, but I could not see his face, as he held up a blue book in either hand, while a third blue book was supported by a massive tea-pot.

'Have I the honour of addressing Mr. Gladstone?' I ventured.

Slowly the blue books appeared to collapse. Where they went to I don't know, but they eventually vanished like things in a pantomime, and I saw before me the clear-cut features—the lofty forehead—the large shirt collar, with which publicly-exposed photographs have made me so familiar. Then a voice replied,

'Yes, I am Gladstone — *the* Gladstone. I know you. Happy to see you. Glad to have a talk with you. Sit down. Take a muffin.'

'Baked at home, I believe?' I responded, as I helped myself, thinking of the white-headed lacquey's information. I made the remark simply because at the moment I could not think of anything else, and certainly I never dreamed that I should arouse the indignation which angrily demanded of me,

'Have you been spending an hour with Lowe on your way hither? Did you sup with Bernal Osborne last night? Have you been to see 'Charles I.' at the Lyceum quite recently, or been reading too many articles in my paper—ahem—the 'Daily Telegraph'—that you are prepared to offer nothing but a frivolous and commonplace observation? You have demanded an interview with me in order that you may converse with me on subjects of imperial and domestic policy. Now, then, begin. What does it matter to you whether I bake my muffins at home, or not?'

'I beg your pardon,' I replied, with some warmth; 'it matters a great deal. Your muffins are better than mine, and I claim a right to ask why this should be so. Why should my articles of consumption be inferior to yours? If you possess a secret which, if divulged, may be of even diminutive benefit to your fellow-men, I deny your right to keep it to yourself.'

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'Humph,' said the Premier, in milder tones; 'your theory would go far to destroy the principle of patents. Have some tea.'

'Thanks. One lump only, if you please. Candidly, now, what is your opinion of a free breakfast-table?'

'Oh, that was one of Bright's unlucky phrases—all rhetoric; like his talk of one wild shriek of Freedom echoing through the world. I'm rhetorical sometimes, they tell me, but I don't believe it. An immense deal of harm is done by the employment of flowery phraseology. I don't myself see how anybody can expect to have a free breakfast-table, any more than a free dinner-table; or that there should be a universal free list in the national theatre of life.'

'Your opinion, then, of Mr. Bright?'

'A man of noble aspirations; the possessor of unrivalled eloquence; a patriot in every corner of his brain; a heart, big with the best intentions; a clear-sighted and far-seeing statesman. But if you ask me as to his practical abilities, his actions as compared with his theories — I'll trouble you for a kidney. Thanks. And the Worcestershire sauce.'

My host fell to work greedily upon the contents of his plate, and I thought it best not to press him to conclude his observations upon the character of his quondam colleague. After a pause, I ventured to say,

'You mentioned the name of Mr. Lowe just now. You asked me if I had been spending an hour with him on my way hither, and I confess I did not see the drift of the question. May I ask for an explanation?'

'Merely this. Your light way of asking if I baked my own muffins, reminded me somewhat of the style of the lively financial

agent of the State. That is just Lowe's way of putting on one side an important matter he does not think it convenient to go into. But he is a capital fellow, Lowe; exasperating at times, no doubt, and difficult to work with. His common sense is of a very uncommon order—simply because it is so very common, if you can understand the apparent paradox. He never considers other people's feelings, if he imagines they are tinged in the remotest degree with sentiment.'

'Certainly,' I observed, 'nobody would imagine that the Chancellor of the Exchequer took a poetic view of things.'

'But he can,' the Premier interrupted, hastily. 'You would say so if you had seen the valentine he sent to Vernon Harcourt. Quite Homeric in its style, I assure you. Let me see. How did it begin?

V. Harcourt's wrath—to Ayrton direful
spring
Of woes unnumbered, gentle Odger, sing.

But I forget, this is a Cabinet secret. Don't tell.'

'Your confidence shall never be abused by me, Mr. Gladstone,' I replied, in dignified tones, in order to assure the Prime Minister that I was no ordinary 'interviewing' newspaper correspondent. 'This same V. Harcourt is rather an awkward customer, is he not?'

The First Lord of the Treasury fell back in his chair in a fit of laughter.

'Oh dear! oh dear!' he exclaimed; 'how innocent you outsiders are. The gentleman you mention is our best friend. He is the straw that shows which way the wind blows; his is the pulse we occasionally feel in order to know whether there is much fever abroad; we don't exactly look at his tongue, but we listen to it, and I assure you it is an extremely

safe indicator of the state of the Liberal stomach, and we adopt our measures accordingly. And how, sir,' continued Mr. Gladstone, with a sudden return to his usual solemnity, 'how, sir, do you like my country?'

In an instant my thoughts reverted to the American experiences of Martin Chuzzlewit. Is it possible, I asked myself, that we, too, have Elijah Pograms amongst us? Can it be that this man thinks—no—perish the notion! But what can he mean?

'Your country?' I replied, interrogatively. 'Sir, permit me to assure you that I am a free-born Briton, a franchise-exercising lodger, and England is as much *my country* as yours!'

'Indeed!' retorted my host, as he gazed at me almost contemptuously. 'Indeed! What have you done for your country, may I ask? Come, if you died this evening, would you be any loss to society? Would you have a public funeral? Would one single newspaper devote a quarter of a column to your memory? Is there any action of your life that is worth recording? Have you benefited mankind by the publication of one noble thought? Have you offered one suggestion the practical consequences whereof may alleviate suffering, may elevate the lower species of humanity, may even in an infinitesimal degree assist the race, of which you are a minute particle, in its perpetual struggles towards the far-off goal of perfection? Now don't pause in the consumption of that rasher of bacon; I know perfectly well the indignant reply that is upon your lips. You flatter yourself you *have* done something worth remembering. You are ready to declare that you have made footprints "on the sands of life somewhere beyond the waves of time,"

and that if they are not observed, it is not your fault, but is owing to the dull perception of your fellow-creatures. Bah!—bosh!—nonsense!—stuff! I read you in your letter. You are one of those miserable *doctrinaires* with whom society in every grade is overrun.. You have deduced from what you call your inner consciousness a certain narrow theory of what things ought to be, and you have never paused to think what right you have to measure man in all his infinite varieties by the rule of your poor thumb. I tell you it is men like you who are the curse of our age. You are the tares among the wheat of intellect. You shatter dynasties and shiver republics; nothing satisfies you unless your notions are carried out to the letter—every *i* dotted, and every *t* crossed. And if you can but realise your theory, you do not care what deluge may await the world. From first to last, I am sick of you all; not a post but brings me such effusions as yours; not a manufacturing town in England from which I do not receive a dozen communications every day, each pointing out to me an ideal high-road to the solution of every intricate problem; each proposing an impossible panacea of every political ill. And not content with giving me the results of your nightmare fancies, you wildly spread them broadcast among thoughtless people, and breed vexation, disappointment, and discontent.'

Having delivered himself in this vehement fashion, the Premier drank off a cup of tea, and quietly began chipping an egg.

I am constrained to say that, for a few moments, I felt at a loss for a suitable reply. He said it all very nicely, and without the slightest appearance of rudeness; and, indeed, I knew that there was a considerable amount of truth in

what he urged, but he was decidedly wrong in applying it to me; so I remained silent for a little while, and trifled with the bacon and a remnant of the muffin.

'How about Ireland?' I ventured, after a considerable pause.

The Premier gave a slight shudder. Ha! had I got him on the raw?

'Do you seriously believe,' I continued, 'that you will ever be able to bring peace, prosperity, and contentment to that troubrous portion of Her Majesty's dominions? Don't be afraid of saying what you think. My theories, wrong as they may be, have been chiefly confined to the welfare of our own more favoured isle. I know little of Ireland, beyond what I have read in Mr. Lever's novels. Calmly and seriously, now, do you think that you will ever be able to make anything of it?'

The Right Honourable groaned; his head drooped upon his breast; but I fancied I heard him mutter,

'Pay the priests.'

'Why not give them what they want?' I pursued. 'Let them have Home Rule. Let them try it for five years, and see what will come of it.'

'Have you any idea what will come of it?' asked my host, regarding me anxiously.

'Yes,' I replied. 'Perpetual internal strife, civil discord, and that which is far worse, inflamed religious antagonism, and eventually humiliation, and its companion, penitence.'

'And do you imagine that this is the duty of an enlightened statesman?' he retorted, with ineffable contempt. 'Do you think that, in order to save myself, and those who may in the immediate future take my place, some present anxiety, I would shift upon those hare-brained patriots a task that

they are hopelessly unequal to perform? Can I get rid of my responsibility by the sacrifice of a generous but short-sighted people? No, there is but one hope for Ireland, and that is, education.'

'The common hope for the advancement of every nation,' I remarked.

'Precisely. And the marvel of it is that we have only just begun to find the secret out, and realise its unspeakable importance.'

'Then the measure you are going this session to introduce—?'

'Is principally for the purpose of feeling our way. Obviously, it will be impossible for me to say so, and my scheme will probably content no party, either at home or there. It is not likely that it should do so. In a matter of such vital importance, the absolute acquiescence of one party means the intense hostility of every other; and though a statesman governs by a party, he does not govern to please it exclusively. If I was the ambitious, selfish criminal some idiots are good enough to think I am, I should not have much difficulty in securing a long lease of what small men envy—power. But in my administration I have two great objects in view; one is to keep England from the horrors of war, and the other is to reform Ireland.'

'And you find the former easier of attainment than the latter—eh? Geneva, for instance.'

'The arbitration, you mean? I don't know that I ever really attached so much importance to that as several of my colleagues did. I am of opinion that it was a simple act of justice, though I am willing to admit that there was a good deal of bungling about the way in which the whole affair was managed from the beginning to the end. And, now, as you appear to have finished breakfast,

perhaps you will have the goodness to detail to me some of your ideas. Out with them!'

'Certainly,' I replied, promptly; 'the Licensing Act, is it not absolutely ridiculous in its present shape?'

'From an abstract point of view, most ridiculous,' returned the Premier; 'but as a practical working measure, there is a good deal to be said for it. In matters of this kind it must always be borne in mind that legislation is for the many, and not for the few. If we merely regarded the *few*, no licensing acts would be necessary at all; we might rest satisfied that the bounds of decorum would never be overstepped; and the hour of closing public-houses and refreshment-bars might be safely left to innate good sentiment and common sense. But, unfortunately, statesmen are obliged to legislate with proper regard to *facts*, and the facts are that a vast quantity of people are not to be trusted, and, I very much regret to say it, must be treated as schoolboys. You must limit their allowance of drink, and you must send them to bed at certain hours. If you do not do so, they will drink too much, and howl about the streets when they ought to be in bed. When you have had my experience—and for the sake of your own peace of mind I sincerely hope that you never may attain to it—you will be compelled to confess that the majority of mankind is not half as reasonable as even the minority consider it to be. Our lunatic asylums are distressingly full, but if you had the misfortune to read a good deal of the correspondence which is addressed to me, you would be compelled to admit that there are still a great many lunatics at large.'

'But, my excellent host,' I ventured to observe, 'is not this equi-

valent to saying that everybody is mad who does not share your opinions?"

'By no means, my more excellent guest. This is not a question of opinion, but of fact. Are you prepared to maintain that if there were no licensing acts at all, the aspect of midnight London would be the better for the absence of legislation in that direction? I am quite aware that certain people whose social position and intellectual qualities entitle them to be heard with respect, argue that the legislature has no right to draw a hard and fast line at eleven o'clock P.M.; but if not at eleven, why at twelve? Why close public-houses and refreshment-bars at any given hour? When the millennium arrives all such legislation may be totally undesirable, but in the present state of things it is tea-totally necessary.'

'But is not your legislation of a vicious description?' I returned. 'Is it not liable to be termed class legislation? Why do you make any distinction between the gentleman's club and the poor man's public-house?'

'Abstractedly, the distinction undoubtedly seems intolerable. But again I appeal to facts. You know as well as I do that any gentleman who obviously drank too much at his club, and was convicted of the offence, would be politely requested to send in his resignation of membership, and, failing his compliance, would be ignominiously expelled.'

'Clayton *v.* Jones,' I murmured.

'Ah! no doubt, in that case, revelations were made public which cannot pass unheeded. High stakes at card-playing in clubs are usually regulated by club rules, which occasionally are disregarded by the immediate authorities. But this opens up a grave question which, sooner or later, must be taken in hand

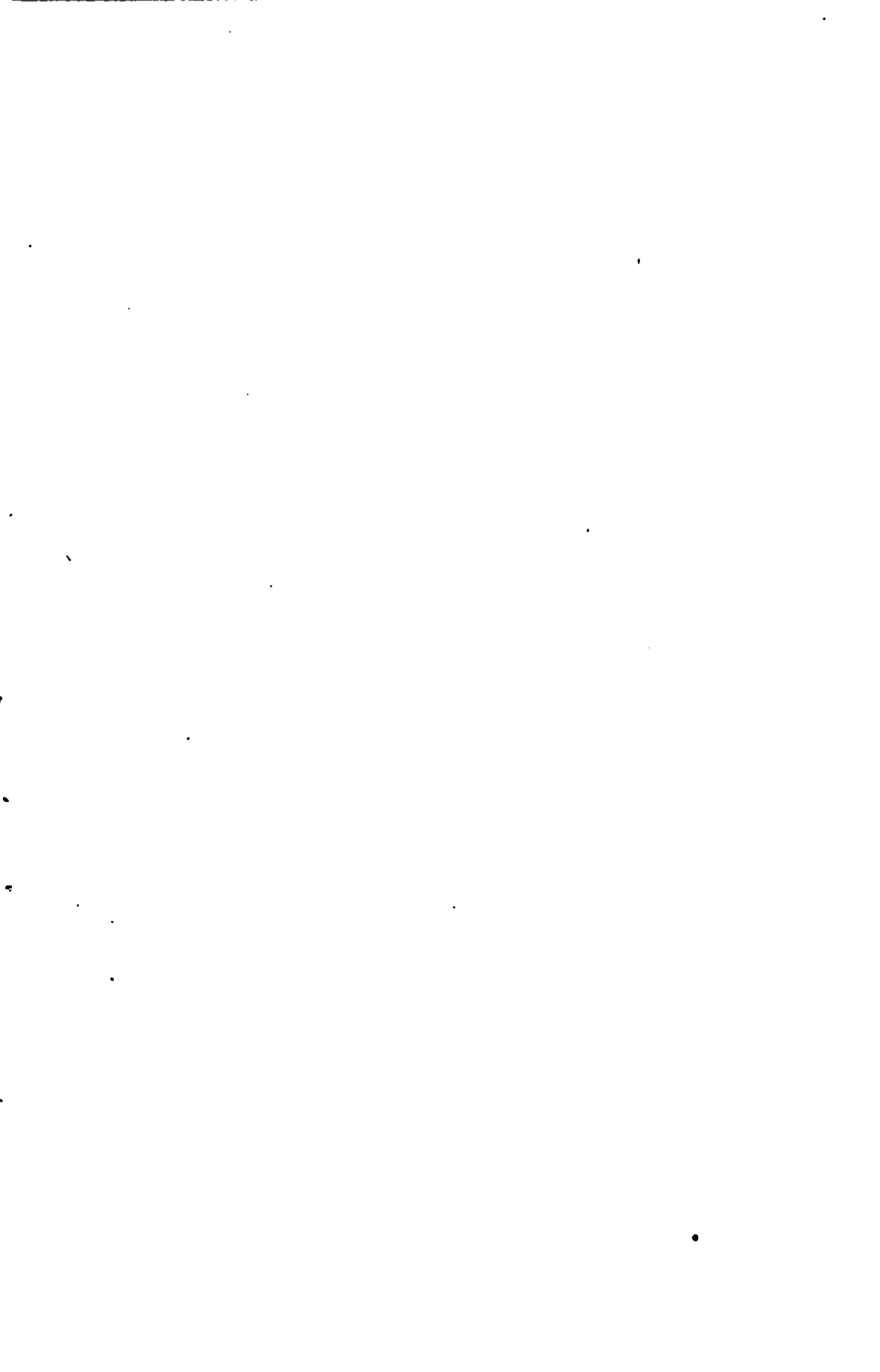
and dealt with in a determined manner—that is, the Turf. I know what is in your mind,—the licensing acts are illogical altogether, if they are not made to extend to the book-maker and the betting-ring. Wait a little. Rest assured that the next parliament will deal with that, and you may count upon the fingers of one hand the years that will elapse before the legislature has interfered in a vigorous manner with the gambling attendant upon the Derby, the Ascot Cup, and the Leger.'

Whether it was the coffee, or the kidneys, or the monotonous intonation of the Premier's voice, I hardly know, but somehow or other I began to feel very sleepy, and the further animadversions I had to make upon domestic policy seemed to fade from my memory. I have a notion that I muttered something about the twenty-fifth clause in the Education Act, local taxation, the income tax, the working of the ballot, and so forth; but I am constrained to say that I do not accurately remember the terse remarks upon each subject which Mr. Gladstone had to offer. I have no doubt they were at the time eminently satisfactory, as I cannot remember that they evoked my combative instincts. All I could recollect is that at last I rose from my seat and addressed my host in terms of admiration which it is not necessary to recapitulate, and that he, in his turn, stood up and made me the subject of remarks which it obviously is not fitting that I should record, lest I should be thought deficient in the virtues of humility and self-respect.

We parted on the best of terms. I believe I actually shed tears, and my eyes felt in such a state of blurr as I left the memorable breakfast-room that the powdered

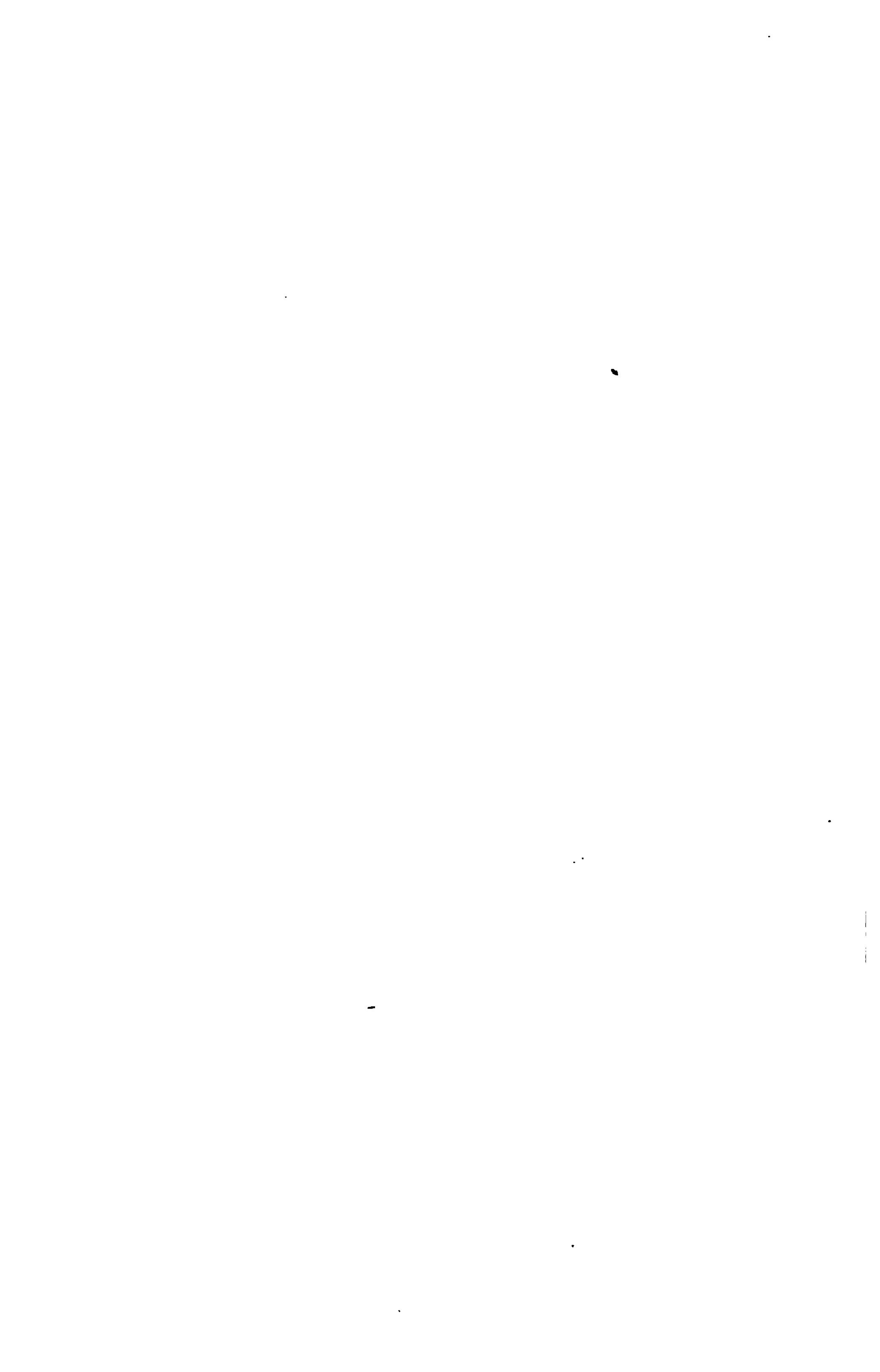
menial who originally introduced me had some difficulty in conducting me to the street-door. The passages seemed strangely long and dark, and I was perpetually knocking my head or my elbows against queer obstructions which did not seem to have any business in my way. At last I reached the hall-door which appeared to open of its own accord, and I passed out into Carlton House Terrace. The fog was thicker than ever, and I began to fear that I should have some difficulty in finding my way back to my lodgings; but hardly had I walked a hundred yards, as it seemed to me, than I found myself at my own door, and then before I had time to get my latch-key out I was in my own room, reposing peacefully in my arm-chair. I began to be terribly afraid that the excitement of the interview I had just enjoyed had been too much for my excitable brain; but before I had time to argue the point with myself, I fell into a deep sleep, and when I

awoke I found that it was past midnight. Gracious! I must have slept all day! I must lose no more time; I must at once make notes of my conversation with Mr. Gladstone. In the first place, where is the letter of invitation? Surely I left it on this table! No. I cannot find it anywhere. Odd. Such a large official-looking document as it was. Ha! I have it. *On Her Majesty's Service*—that is it. I hastily open it. No—this is an impertinent reminder from Somerset House that I have neglected to make a proper return of my income. In vain I search—I can find no other official despatch. A dreadful thought flashes across my brain as I catch sight of the date of the evening paper lying on my table. I feel just as Mr. H. J. Montague must have felt under similar circumstances in '*Tears! Idle Tears!*' Is it possible that it is all a dream? I cannot—will not—believe it. Oh, if I could but find my Card of Invitation!









AN APRIL DAISY.

WHITE daisy in the growing grass,
Now I have lost my winter fear—
Pure promise of the budding year,
And pleasures that shall come to pass.

Of summer and the sun you speak,
Of childhood with its healthy cheek,
Red-ripening lips and sweet glad eyes,
Where truest love untainted lies,
Where beauty laughs, and passion shows
Its colour like an opening rose.

Pink-lidded harbinger of spring !
You tell of swallows on the wing—
Swallows that are ever roaming,
Sailing, sinking in the gloaming,
Dipping to streak the silken stream,
Upon whose bank young lovers dream
In dim seclusion ; where the beech
Bends over with a graceful reach
Unto the water's shelving brim ;
Where swarms of shining minnows swim,
And glide among tall taper reeds,
And under waving folds of weeds.
You speak of blue-bells in the wood,
Of fruitfulness and fairyhood.
The lady-smocks with faint blush stain
Shall line the brown paths of the lane ;
The butterflies and springtime noise
Shall bless the hearts of merry boys,
And western winds shall smooth the curls
That shade the eyes of happy girls.

Gold-crested herald of the spring !
You tell of blackbirds that shall sing
In secret plots of freshened green ;
Of walks in evening dusk, between
The sinking sun and rising moon,
When trees are full of leaves in June.

White daisy in the growing grass,
Now I have lost my winter fear—
Pure promise of the budding year,
And pleasures that shall come to pass.

GUY ROSLYN.

BOOKS OF THE SEASON.

WE purpose to give a brief glance at the books of the season. The subject is a vast one, but it may be possible to obtain a bird's-eye view of it, to notice the main drift and current of literature, to give a few words of greeting and recognition to the more important of those works which are likely to be interesting to our readers, and attempt some estimate that may help in the selection of books. Amid all the methods that have been invented for passing time, perhaps there is none pleasanter than when the wind is whistling and the snow-drift falling without, resolutely to turn away from all the outdoor fascinations of the season to listen to the pleasant, agreeable voices of those who speak to us in contemporary letters. There was a certain clever lord who made a point of never reading the book that was the rage, but of waiting till the excitement had blown by, and he could judge of its merits. It will be of use, perhaps, if we step back a pace or two from the glittering shelves, and with some deliberation pull down for inspection, first one and then another of the more important publications.

One of the first thoughts that a survey of the literature of the season awakes, is that of the tremendous gap that has been made in the first ranks of our literary men by the hardly-opened obituary of the season. The Emperor Napoleon has given so much employment to the pens of others, that it was hardly noticed how very much of a literary man he had been himself. If his writings in times past have been eagerly examined, and their inmost meanings inter-

rogated, it was for any light they might throw upon his political designs. In truth there was much in those writings that would justify the most depreciatory comments of his enemies. We hold it impossible that a man should have written so much as Napoleon the Third without unfolding much of his intellectual and moral character. Yet no one has ever been able to rise from a perusal of the 'Life of Caesar' and the 'Napoleonic Ideas' with any feeling of sympathy or admiration for their author. At the best he will simply fill a niche in the catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors. There is a feeling of blankness, heaviness, indefiniteness through all. The brilliant, diamond-like language of France loses all its glitter and point in imperial manipulation. Our own Merivale leaves the Emperor leagues behind. Much as we detest the first Napoleon—and M. Lanfrey is more and more bringing out the odious character of his imperialism—there was in his conversation a literary force and vigour of which not the faintest trace is discoverable in the writings of his nephew. The simple charm of our own Queen Victoria's writings immeasurably transcends any personal impress that belongs to the late Emperor. When any thorough investigation is made into the career of the late Emperor, it will be seen that his reign and his writings were more in accordance than has been suspected, and that in neither case could favourable inferences be drawn from the one to the other.

The death of Lord Lytton was everywhere heard of with a thrill of personal sorrow and regret. His last anonymous works, the

'Parisians' and the 'Coming Race,' will now vigorously come to the fore in all lists of books, and his posthumous novel will be received as the lasting legacy of a great master's art. He was not a world-wide genius like Scott or Dickens, but he was not far from them, and some of his best works will be longer and better known than some of their worst. His genius had more of expansion than intensity, and would have flowed with greater force through a narrower groove. We should like to see well worked out by a competent person—and in this age of spiritualism the matter is becoming increasingly important—how far there was an element of seriousness in such conceptions as Lord Lytton developed in his 'Zanoni' and 'Strange Story.' It would also be instructive to disengage Lord Lytton's social and psychological philosophy from those strata of fiction in which they are imbedded. It is to be regretted that a writer in a paper so honest and able as the 'Spectator' should have dogmatically pronounced that the career of Lord Lytton was a failure. We should imagine that the writer would be very glad to have a chance of the thousandth part of such a failure. It would also be interesting to know what his notion of success would be likely to be. Every educated Englishman owes a debt to the writer of the 'Cartons' and the 'Caxtoniana.' That career was no failure whose close was lamented by myriads and whose obsequies were at Westminster Abbey.

Then we must give a word to brave old Adam Sedgwick. His 'Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge' has passed into the classics of the language. His noble Preface recals the grand prefaces of the

great scholars of the seventeenth century. Long before his decease he had passed into a glorious tradition of his University. It was the boast of hundreds of men scattered all over England that they had attended Sedgwick's lectures. No life, not even Roderick Murchison's, was more fruitful in results favourable to the cause of science. To him, as much, if not more than to any other man, is attributable the firm hold which Natural Science is obtaining over the rising intellect of this country. Other valuable lives have passed away in the course of the winter that have a kind of reflected influence on literature; the last was Lady Beaconsfield, 'the severest of critics, but a perfect wife;' and Dr. Lushington, the depositary of all the Byronic mysteries, which he has wisely still left sealed.

We think that, on the whole, except in one very important department, that of biography, the literary season has been comparatively sterile. It would hardly be in our way to notice Theology—which always has the place of honour in classified lists of books—except to report an utter want of the excitement which sometimes prevails in this region of letters. The plan still exists—a sort of backwater wave from the 'Essays and Reviews'—of sets of people clubbing together ecclesiastical essays, but their interest is limited, and a frequent editor of such works, Mr. Orby Shipley, is also in every way limited. It must be noticed, however, that Canon Liddon is as popular a writer as he is an orator, and his last book, though slight, fully deserves its extensive circulation. None of our poets are filling the literary heavens with song. Mr. Tennyson has given us a new poem in a dedication to the Queen, pre-

fixed to the new edition of his works, in which he brands with shame an ungenerous leader in the 'Times' on Canada. As a leader-writer in the 'Times' must necessarily be a devout believer in the dogma of his own infallibility, he of course repeats the remark combated by the Laureate. These leaders will perhaps have a chance of being mentioned by some future scholiast on Tennyson in elucidating the text of his author. But it is in the domain of history that we are chiefly struck by the absence of literature of permanent value. Only a few years ago and there was a regular periodical supply of historical works. Macaulay and Hallam indeed were gone, but Mr. Froude gave us steady instalments of his work, and Mr. Motley produced his volumes on the Netherlands, and Professor Rawlinson had his 'Five Ancient Monarchies,' and Mr. Freeman was progressing with his 'Norman Conquest,' and there was generally some large work ahead by Mr. Grote; or perhaps there might be something from Lord Stanhope or M. Guizot. At present, however, history is almost a total blank. Almost the only exception we can meet is a work by a new writer, Mr. W. Watkiss Lloyd, 'The History of Sicily' (Murray). Most of us know very little about Sicily till we come to the sixth and seventh books of Thucydides—for our own part, we don't want to hear of the Peloponnesian War again as long as we live—but the earlier history really required a work. Mr. Lloyd has done well, but he might have done better. On such difficult subjects as Greek philosophy and colonization, and the Pindaric odes, he has established a most creditable *επίδειξις* of scholarship and literary power. The lapsed historical works were really

periodical works. Almost the only periodical work of importance is Mr. Whitwell Elwin's edition of Pope. Mr. Elwin is perhaps the greatest authority we have on the Popian *vera*. Lord Macaulay was supposed to have the greatest knowledge of literary detail of the time of Queen Anne, though perhaps Lord Stanhope was not a whit behind. Mr. Elwin probably exceeds both. We are fond of reading notes ourselves, and we hardly know of any annotation more learned, pleasant, and discursive than that of the late editor of the 'Quarterly Review.' Poor Pope might well wish to be saved from his friends, for he never encountered from any of the family of the 'Dunciad' more persevering and unrelenting hostility than he does from his present editor. There is an utter want of sympathy towards Pope even in passages of his correspondence relating to the poet's mother, where his sympathies might most legitimately have been enlisted. The present volume is certainly remarkable. The letters between Pope and Lord Bathurst were originally transcribed for Mr. Cowper, but they have been compared and revised for the late editor of the 'Quarterly' by the late editor of the 'Edinburgh,' a pleasant instance of the amenities of literature. In one of his notes Mr. Elwin gives a pleasant anecdote of the first Lord Bathurst. 'Two years before he died he was sitting late with a convivial circle he had assembled at his country-house. His son retired after delivering the admonition, "that health and long life were best secured by regularity," and as he shut the door, the father, who certainly had not been cut off in his youth, said to his guests, "Come, my good friends, since the old gentleman is gone to bed,

I think we will venture to crack another bottle." The correspondence between Pope and Lord Orrery, with some unimportant exceptions, is quite new, having lately been contributed by the Earl of Cork.

In this remarkable dearth of historical literature, Mr. Froude's work on 'The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century' comes nearest to supply the gap. Mr. Froude's work is quite historical, and is written with all the charm of his well-known style. He grew weary of his great history. He was crushed by his own resources, stifled in the ocean of Elizabethan literature. It was too much for him. He gave it up. We are not sorry for it. There was too much of special pleading and gaudy rhetoric. Tired of the seventeenth century he has now made a vault into the eighteenth. Mr. Froude has backed the sincerity of his convictions by going over to America, in order to put in a reply to the charges that the Irish in America constantly reiterate against us, and which ignorant people might suppose to be unanswerable because unanswered. There are many pages, sorrowful, sickening, maddening, in this work, but Mr. Froude writes honestly, and those who study it honestly, will admit that although Mr. Froude, according to the Froudian nature, can't help being a savage partizan, he has substantially made out his case. Mr. Froude too much follows the grim precedent that Thomas Carlyle set in Cromwell. The gist of his argument is, that in this world, 'the superior part has a natural right to govern; the inferior has a natural right to be governed.' He also shows a grim sarcasm when he speaks of abduction cases and other brutalities as 'Irish ideas.' A great deal

of criticism might be made on his rash major premisses, and even where he is most true, his way of putting the truth is not likely to conciliate the Irish. Any one who followed the discussions in New York between him and Father Bourke, would see the subject still further elucidated, and additional strength imported to Mr. Froude's conclusions. Mr. Froude loves Ireland, and has found a home there, and if ever a time should come when Irishmen will be disposed to do justice to England in this great controversy, Mr. Froude will be found to have done real service to the cause of truth. We wish he had intercalated a chapter on England's debt to Ireland, her great undoubted debt in literature, arts, and arms. Our great error has lain in our variations of policy through frequent changes of ministry, and the corruption that marked the legislation of the Union. It is instructive to know that the Irish once clamoured for a Union as they now clamour against it, and if they obtained Home Rule, which, in a modified form, is perhaps not so objectionable as might be thought, there would probably be, in time, an agitation to procure the repeal of the Act that should grant it.

The extremely rich Biography, as we have hinted, makes some amends for the paucity of books in history. The most popular biographies have been literary biographies—the second volume of the 'Life of Dickens,' and the 'Life of Captain Marryat.' These works are now in every one's hands, and beyond this mention it will not be necessary to say more respecting them. There are some biographies which are strictly *mémoires pour servir à l'histoire*. Such especially is that of Baron Stockmar, translated by Mrs. Max Müller. This work will always be con-

sidered an authority for the events of the Victorian era. Stockmar shows how there may be persons standing behind the throne who have a secret and greater influence over the throne than any Minister of State. In fact he had to try and hide the effects of his own great influence, and efface its marks. He was a singularly honest and intrepid man. He spoke the truth—always so useful, sometimes so unpalatable, to princes. In fact, at times he could hardly be civil to his royal friends. He ran away from them whenever he chose. He would not even answer their letters when they wrote. But he did them admirable service; gave them all his skill, sagacity, and the very best of his life. They were fortunate in such a Mentor. He himself was no less fortunate in being thrown into such a position with such princes. Stockmar happily combined the practical character of the Englishman with the profound thoughtfulness of the German. There was no detail of life which he would not trace up to an eternal principle. He profoundly distrusted any mere success that did not rest upon a moral basis. He disbelieved in the star of the first Napoleon, and had a belief in the waking of a moral power, as a real element in the fate of peoples, and in nationalities, as no less real forces. In King Leopold, and afterwards in our own Queen and Prince Consort, he found those whose principles absolutely coincided with his own. He it was who taught Queen Victoria, when misled by Lord Melbourne, that she must belong to no political party, but must be equally the Queen of all her people. As companion and tutor to Prince Albert, he trained him for his vast future responsibilities. Lord Palmerston did not, we are afraid, like Stockmar much, but he said

that he was the most disinterested man whom he had ever met. His sumptuous tomb at Cobourg is erected 'by his friends in the reigning families of Belgium, Cobourg, England and Prussia,' and has the inscription: 'There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'

Materials for Victorian history are indeed fast accumulating. The inner history of our Court is almost as well known to contemporaries as it can be to the historians. We shall have no archives of Simancas, for our archives are already unveiled. The Queen took her people into her confidence, and we have ceased to have secrets among ourselves. The 'Letters and Journals of the late Lord Elgin,' edited by Mr. Theodore Walrond, with a preface by the Dean of Westminster, is a remarkable book, the exhibition of a noble life and a noble style of British statesmanship. It is a biography that subserves some of the highest purposes of history. If Lord Elgin had been spared, there would probably have remained for him a great career in this country, beyond the Indian viceroyalty. He was the son of the Elgin Marbles man. He showed himself a profound scholar, with all that philosophical breadth which is almost unknown to the more technical scholarship of Cambridge. He followed the almost discarded plan that made the scholars of old so great, of going back to the 'Origines.' He says, 'Ancient history, together with Aristotle's 'Politics,' and the ancient orators, are to be read in connection with the Bible history;' and in the same way he believes that all branches of mental and moral science 'hinge upon the New Testament, as constituting, in another line, the history of moral and intellectual development.' If he had not early attained his peer-

age, he might have had a great career in the House of Commons.

It was during this Chinese mission that he pithily observed, 'The Chinese do not care much about being killed, but they hate being frightened.' 'Tell Lord Elgin,' said Sir William Peel, 'that it was the Chinese Expedition that relieved Lucknow, relieved Cawnpore, and fought the battle of the 6th December.' We pass over his renewed work in relation with China, his relations with Japan and Java, to look on the closing scene of that busy viceroyalty of India. He committed the imprudence of crossing the twig bridge at the Chenob, which he says was 'the most difficult job he ever attempted,' but he never rallied from the terrible exhaustion. The latent disease of the heart was fatally developed. It is remarkable that his first wife died from a shock to the system, brought on by a shipwreck which spared them both when they went out to Jamaica. His proper resting-place would have been in the Abbey church of Dunfermline, his ancestral home; but Dean Stanley truly says that the heights of Dhurmsala furnished a fitting grave 'for the Viceroy of India, overlooking from its lofty height the vast expanse of the hill and plain of these mighty provinces—a fitting burial-place, beneath the snow-clad Himalaya range, for one who dwelt with such serene satisfaction on all that was grand and beautiful in men and nature. A last home—may we not say?—of which the very name, with its double signification, was worthy of the spirit which there passed away—"the Hall of Justice; the Place of Rest." If we would take Mr. Tennyson's homily seriously to heart, and not be afraid of knowing how great we are, Englishmen will study the lessons of this sincere,

beneficent career in Jamaica, Canada, and the East.

We are very glad that, in default of a better from another source, Mrs. Oliphant has written her 'Life of Montalembert' (Blackwood). She has not done the work in the best way; has not produced so good a work as the 'Life of Irving'; has left her own one-sided mark as woman, novelist, and religionist on that singular career; has made wonderful misconceptions and omissions; but it was just the kind of book that was wanted to familiarise the English mind with the higher mind of France. Unfortunately, France showed itself unworthy of such a mind and such a life; and we are afraid that the average Englishman would find many features of his career absolutely unintelligible. The position of Montalembert was in many respects unique. He was the last of the Crusaders. He was the last hereditary peer of France. He was both peer and schoolmaster. He was the champion of beaten causes. He was thoroughly French, but in parentage he was half English. He was theoretically a democrat, and practically an aristocrat. He was thoroughly Catholic; and though he might have submitted, which is a very moot point, to the dogma of Infallibility, assuredly his sympathies would have gone with such men as Dupanloup and Döllinger. He was a great artist and a great antiquary. He was a born orator, and his oratorical triumphs were among the greatest which this century has witnessed. The governing points in his character were his love of constitutional liberty, and his devotion to the Church. The contest in which he engaged with the Emperor, culminating in the sentence, and in the forgiveness that he repudiated, was in reality one of the greatest blows that the

Second Empire ever experienced. There are many striking portions of this great career which Mrs. Oliphant's pictorial pen can graphically depict. Such are his youthful connection with Lamennais and Lacordaire; the beautiful home which he constructed for himself on the plains of Burgundy; the great scenes in the Chamber of Peers, in the National Assembly, and at the Congress of Nations; the home in Paris, the scene of his long, lingering death; his stay in Toulon, his pilgrimages abroad—all of which are sympathetically and gracefully described. But Mrs. Oliphant has not fathomed, has not realized the depths of his feelings in religious and political matters; and although she translated his 'Monks of the West,' the most brilliant of his literary fragments, she does not appear to have carefully studied his mind through the whole cycle of his writings. To Englishmen, Montalembert will always be especially dear. He loved our country, and held us up to the love and admiration of France. The cultured mind of England returned that love. Those who were at Oxford or Cambridge at the time, will remember the striking enthusiasm that was exhibited on his behalf, and the resolution of the undergraduates to pay the fine. It was, perhaps the most striking declaration against Imperialism ever made in this country. Montalembert himself looked gloomily on his history, the spectre of his 'darkened and baffled career.' But in this gloomy thought he was essentially mistaken. His triumphs in the cause of education would alone make his career successful; but when his life is properly written, and written by a Frenchman of kindred aspirations, then the moral effect of his heroic example will have its effect on the regeneration of France.

The scene is indeed shifted when we turn to the next English biography of a remarkable man. This is Mr. Fitzgerald's 'Life and Adventures of Alexander Dumas' (Tinsley). The difference is immense. It is as if one should emerge from Westminster Abbey and mount a twopenny omnibus to go to one of the theatres. The biography is merely a theatrical biography. It is written throughout with a constant side glance to the state of the London theatres. The first volume is theatrical alone, without any relief, except a brief notice of Dumas' brief connection with the 'Revue des Deux Mondes,' 'the most creditable literary connection with which he was ever concerned.' Mr. Fitzgerald hardly cares to disguise his strong contempt of his hero. If in Montalembert we contemplate a life pure, elevated, and good, fraught with all tender and solemn associations, there is something inconceivably grotesque in the little, self-conscious, vain character of Dumas. It is to be said for Dumas, however, what he constantly urged on his own behalf, that he was his father's son—a father not to be confounded with a second and a third Dumas of the time of Napoleon, but still a chivalrous Bayard in his way. The admixture of negro blood really seems to have given Dumas an element of tropical luxuriousness and fire. Dumas also claimed a marquisate for himself, alleged to have been created by Louis XIV. in 1707; but he candidly owns: 'Of this creation I have been able to find no traces.' Mr. Fitzgerald's memoir is substantially based on Dumas' own memoirs and his various autobiographic references; not that he is indebted for his original sources, except in an undefined way, to M. Philarète Chasles. Dumas, as

pourtrayed by himself, is theatric, exaggerated, unnatural. There are only a few natural touches which help to relieve the history. These are the remarkable fidelity with which he was able to reproduce all the scenes and incidents of childhood, with its dreamy, imaginative power of peopling old forests and palaces with scenes and personages of the past, and the way in which, when funds were low, he stopped at a little seaside inn at Trouville—in days when Trouville was only a small fishing village—and was boarded and lodged at two francs a day. A lucky accident gave him a humble place in the secretary's office of the Duke of Orleans; and Louis-Philippe seems to have showed the young dramatist a great deal of good-natured encouragement. Nothing can be more bombastic and absurd than the letter which he sent to the king, saying that *his political opinions not being in harmony with those of his majesty*, he begged to resign his small berth; a letter which he described 'as making the king quail.' The brief serious episode of the first volume is Dumas falling ill of Asiatic cholera; the cholera that caused such an alarm that the Odéon had once only a single spectator, who compelled the actors to go through the whole of the performance. After all, Dumas had the great gift of genius. As a writer of stories he was unrivalled in his way. Who ever forgets the delicious delight with which he first read '*Monte Cristo?*' A criticism of M. de Cassagne's describes, however, the 'romantic drama,' both in play and fiction; and some of our modern dramatists and novelists might well ponder the words: 'Are we to throw a great and crowded hall into convulsions of agitation at the expense of all that

is good and improving; sending them away a pale and flattered herd, who seemed to have been dosed with ether or opium? Are the personages on the stage to be poets, or to be gladiators?'

But, that our biographical talk may not pass away with a foreign flavour, unpleasing, unanxious, let us just mention Mr. Hare's '*Memorials of a Quiet Life*' (Strahan). This is a pious son's memorial of an eminently good and gifted mother. She herself knew his literary design, and approved it; and her own writings furnish the deepest and most instructive part of the work. The Hares were in themselves a host, and by their literary and family alliances contributed a large and important element to the thought and culture of their day. Indeed, if we were required to point out the highest outcome of English gentleness, culture, and religion, we should point to the famous and happy home of Hurstmonceaux Rectory. In that pretty village, lying within sight of the sea, within the shelter of the Sussex woods, there was a literary society worthy of Tusculum itself, or of the Cephissia of Herodes Atticus. Every question bearing on the prospects and condition of Church and State was there debated, every truly liberal measure was warmly discussed: the last political phase of France; the last Art-discovery in Italy; the last development of philosophical thought in Germany; the ponderous tomes of Christian Fathers, as well as the thin duodecimos of modern poets, found sympathetic perusal; while the all-accomplished rector took the highest paths of fervour and thought, and was first and foremost in all schemes of practical, self-denying goodness.

Mr. Hare has also given us a book of travel on Spain, a worthy

companion to his well-known book on Rome. This is the best example of what we may call the homeward, the inner circle of travel. Of travels farther off we have just noted a work on the Caucasus; and we suppose that it was the success of Colonel Yule's matchless edition of 'Marco Polo' that has caused Mr. Murray to reprint 'Wood's Journey to the Source of the Oxua.' Mr. Stanley's book, 'How I Found Livingstone,' has been so generally discussed that we need not now consider its merits—and demerits. Of the large number of publications dealing with scientific subjects, there are hardly any which we should be able to bring before the notice of our esteemed friend 'the general reader.' One such book there was, which appeared early in the season, and which held its own with the last novel and the last idyll. We need hardly say that this was Mr. Darwin's work on

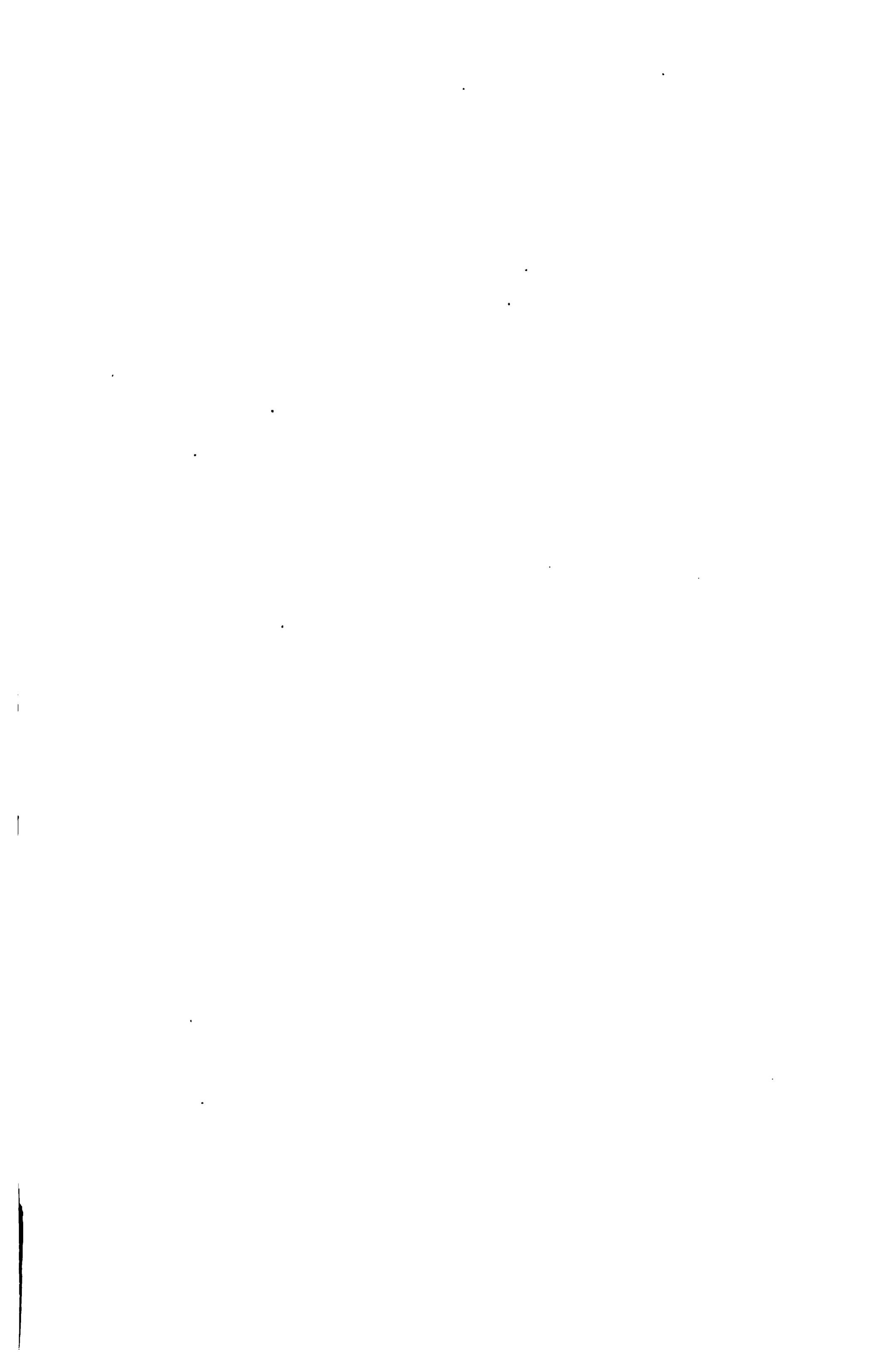
'The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals.' Only—verb. *sap.*—let the reader first master Sir Charles Bell's wonderful book on 'The Anatomy of Expression,' in which he will be assisted by the masterly plates of that great draughtsman. The work itself is not directly contributory to Mr. Darwin's great argument of Evolution. But he wants to show how we mere Ascidiants, in our progress from the Oyster to Osiris, have become susceptible of the amiability of blushing, and of the dignity of grief. Our readers will find the book crowded with acutest facts and comments from the most patient and diligent of observers, and can enjoy them perfectly without accepting the theory of the Descent of Man, which our author throughout assumes as a postulate, but which most scientific men regard as the most monstrous of unscientific assumptions.

FREDERICK ARNOLD.



Drawn by M. E. Edwards.]

"A MODERN SHRINE."



AT A MODERN SHRINE.

WITH a spray of shower-wet lilac in your hand,
 There you stand ;
 And an April sun is glinting on your hair.
 Are you not incarnate Spring ?
 Can I limn you ? 'Twere a thing'
 That might drive a dexter artist to despair.

May not fancy hear Arcadian sheep-bells tinkle,
 As you sprinkle
 Diamond droplets from that fragrant purple spire ?
 Is the hyacinth's own hue
 Of a sweeter, suaver blue
 Than your eyes of soft and silken-shaded fire ?

Yet no unsubstantial allegoric thing,
 Like the Spring
 Of the poets and the painters, love, are you.
 Not a sylph, but sweetly human,
 And a very, very woman,
 Though you look as though compact of sun and dew.

And you will not, like a vision, melt in air,
 If I dare
 To engirdle you with merely mortal arm ;
 Proudly blest to so environ
 Such a super-dainty siren,
 Unafraid of ghostly flight, or evil charm.

You're a merry mortal maiden, and no myth,
 Like Lilith,
 Or the briny beauties shunned by sage Ulysses ;
 Your drift of sunny hair
 Is no silky-subtle snare,
 And your lips were never shaped for cruel kisses.

Yet you catch and keep my heart, and show no mercy,
 Little Circe,
 And in sooth I'm quite resigned to such a capture.
 Who'd resist or turn a railer
 At so generous a gaoler ?
 Lo ! I yield to love's restraint with ready rapture.

Ay, your voice is very sweet and most seductive,
 Yet productive
 Of no peril, and no sudden pang, and sharp.
 Near your swift and sweeping finger,
 'Tis as safe as sweet to linger,
 For you play on the piano—not the harp !

So ! you shake a saucy head, and swear I flatter !
 Well, what matter ?

I prefer you much to all the classic ladies,
 Be they goddesses or graces,
 And whatever be their places,
 From the heaven-kist Olympus down to—Hades !

' There is nothing very classical about you ?'—
 Well, I doubt you ;

You've a soft Ionic air, a grace that's Attic ;
 Yet I own you're not antique,
 And for English over Greek,
 I avow that I've a preference emphatic.

There is many a little trifler with the Muses,
 Who abuses

Everything that is post-Phidian and pretty ;
 But all loveliness is no man's,
 And the Grecians, and the Romans,

Did not turn out a Turner or an Etty.

I think that theirs was not the *only* Charis,
 And that Paris

Might distribute a whole orchard, love, to-day,
 And yet appear invidious ;
 Praxiteles and Phidias

Shake hands with Leech and Leighton and Millais.

I am sure your hair has hyacinthine grace,
 And your face

Is as sweet and pure as any marble Clyte ;
 And, although you're scarce at home
 In the clouds or on the foam,

You're a perfect *terra firma* Aphrodite.

Did not Gibson perpetrate a tinted Venus ?
 (Which, between us,

Was a saucer-eyed and saffron-hued delusion)
 But I swear, my darling, that you
 Are like poor Pygmalion's statue,

When just flushing with life's roseate suffusion.

If you're scarcely statuesque, you're sweet and simple,
And that dimple
That is lurking underneath your lower lip,
Is a charm the marble misses ;
Oh ! a fig for Parian kisses
While from such a rosy chalice I may sip.

Let Anacreon, let Horace and Tibullus,
Or Catullus,
Sing of Lalage and Pyrrha and the rest of them,
I'll back my British beauty,
From her chignon to her shoe-tie,
To compete in grace and sweetness with the best of them.

Oh ! you say my pretty talk is most misleading—
Special pleading !
Now, that really is exceedingly ungracious.
I protest that my defence
Of the present's no pretence,
And my praise of your sweet self is most veracious.

I've a very great respect for Attic art,
For my part,
Yet I think, in spite of ultra-classic sages,
That the grand Hellenic story
Don't exhaust creation's glory,
And that Nature's is a book of many pages.

I believe that, could I see a Grecian goddess
In a bodice
Poppy-hued, and skirts the colour of the wheat ;
With a spray of lilac blossom
In her chastely-covered bosom,
I should find my British darling just as sweet.

Love and loveliness can never be antique,
And the Greek
No monopoly of either I'll allow ;
And I really do not care
For the whole of Lemprière,
While to such a modern goddess I may bow.

E. J. M.

AMONG THE LAPPS.

BY THOMAS SHIRP,

AUTHOR OF 'UP IN THE NORTH.'

IT was at the latter end of July that we found ourselves up at Skallstugan, a little station on the great highway which runs across the Scandinavian peninsula, between Trondhjem and Sundswall on the gulf of Bothnia. After a hard day's driving, fishing, and exploring, we were glad to take shelter from the bitterly cold evening air; for here the road runs two thousand feet above the sea, and when the sun is gone the breezes are cruelly chill. We had another toilsome day's occupation cut out for the morrow, having arranged to pay a visit to an encampment of Lapps, who had taken up their quarters on the fjell, about six or seven miles from the station, on the frontier line of the Swedish and Norwegian kingdoms.

When the morning came we were somewhat disappointed to find that a steady drizzling rain was falling, which did not make the occasion inviting for a trudge through a marsh; however, as we were, of course, provided with waterproofs, the state of the weather was but of minor importance.

By the time that we had breakfasted (off *fresh* meat, be it observed, if it can be conceded that the flesh of the goat is ever fresh: I do not incline to that opinion) the rain had ceased, and a feeble strip of glimmering yellow appeared away on the horizon, where the dull grey clouds were endeavouring to tear themselves asunder, and dissolve partnership, giving every prospect of one of those sudden clearances of the weather which are not uncommon in moun-

tain districts. Hopes began to revive within us, and we started in anticipation of seeing the sun again before the day should end.

After a walk of three miles or more through a marsh, which, thanks to the dryness of the season, was easily passable, having in few parts water more than a few inches deep, and being in its worst places bridged by tree-stumps, we came to a lake, where a very cranky old boat was drawn up. The rain had commenced again in a very persistent drizzle, and the tops of the mountains were concealed in blue wreaths of mist and cloud, while the valleys were white with steamy vapours—altogether, most unpleasant weather. Our party consisted of five, the Danish professor, the Swedish baron, myself and *res-kamrat*, and the *vägvisare*.

Had the day been fine, and the atmosphere clear, the scene would have been very charming; as it was we could see nothing but the murky water reflecting the dull, heavy, leaden clouds; the incessant fall of the fine, perpendicular rain; the gloomy forests of black pine; and the tall mountains far away in mist and clouds, their sides dappled with patches of last winter's snow.

The baron and the guide were our oarsmen, who, what with the badness of the oars and the worse-ness (if such a word may be permitted) of the weather, did not have altogether an enviable task. Their labours were, however, rewarded, for we at length arrived at the farther marge of the lake, when we struggled up the hill-side to the Lapp encampment.

No sign of life was visible in

the camp when we entered, and all that gave token of the presence of man was a faint column of blue-grey smoke, curling from the top of one of the tents or *katas*, of which there were two. No reindeer, no cattle, no horses, no dogs even, were visible; the only moving thing being the steady rain, which fell with as much perseverance as if no moisture had been known in the land for a long age.

The site of the camp was barren enough, a few stunted birch trees being the sole representatives of vegetable life, unless one includes the few patches of *Na-bär* and the scraps of moss, which had been trodden as nearly as possible to the condition of the meagre soil which afforded them their existence.

This scene of desolation and unmitigated dampness was the actual home of the Laplander, and now were we to make acquaintance with a family of these quaint and interesting people. They are true Mongolians, we are told, and much of the poetical is often connected with their names. The Arabs of the north, the dwellers in tents, the proud and ingenious people who are vainglorious of their isolated life and contented with their peacefulness, who have never known war with their neighbours nor feuds among themselves, and who so rejoice in the natural beauties of the country they inhabit that it seems to them the fairest the world can boast.

Surely this is a people with whom it is well to make acquaintance!

The *vägvisare* lifts the flap which serves as an entrance to the tent, and announces our arrival to the family within. It is an ordinary *kata*, perhaps eight feet in diameter, with a fire in its centre, above which is a hole in

the roof, to serve as a means of exit for the smoke. We conjecture that such a tent might accommodate two, three, perchance four persons, and we wait to see how many shall emerge.

One comes forth, a man, dressed in a garment of skin, brown and rusty, with a tall cap, also brown and rusty, which has a long projecting peak. Spangles of brass and other barbarous ornaments adorn his person, and a knife hangs at his side. His face is tanned to the colour of his dress of skins; his expression is one of low cunning and arrant knavery, and his bleared eyes, that are watering from the smoky atmosphere in which he has been sitting, lend to his hang-dog face an appearance of dissipation that is melancholy to see. Is there anything of poetry about this creature? Poetry! there is nothing but dirt.

But he is followed by another animal of the same type—an old woman, who grins, and smirks, and chatters; an undesirable, filthy old hag. Then follows a younger woman, another man, a third woman, two more men; and there are still an old man and two women in the tent. We have been deceived by the chroniclers of Lappish traditions, if these are fair specimens of the people. They are a low and filthy herd, who are not inodorous. Dirt is the only thing remarkable about them, and that one sees in perfection. Their clothes are plastered with dirt, their faces are smeared with dirt, their hands are caked with dirt; they are the princes of dirt, the very personification of dirt.

'What have you brought for us?' inquires the undesirable hag.

'Nothing.'

'Nothing! But when visitors come to see the Lapp they always bring a present. Tobacco. Spirit.'

'Not always; for we have not.'

'Not even a drop of schnapps? not one of you?'

'No, not one of us. But we will give you money, and you can send down to Skallstugan and buy spirit at the *gästgivaregård*.'

Delight shines on every face, even through the grimy encrustations, and there is evident emulation amongst them as to which shall first obtain the means of procuring drunkenness. We distribute enough dollars to allow the whole camp to remain in a state of utter intoxication for a week; when, their cupidity satisfied, they give their minds to impertinent curiosity.

'How old are you?' questions the old woman, who seems to be the principal squaw.

'Are you married?'

'Have you any children? How many?'

These questions go the round of us, and are answered with more or less truthfulness — perhaps decidedly less; for what do our domestic circumstances concern these apostles of dirt?

Having gratified the curiosity of the family, we suggest a visit to their herds, and inquire how many reindeer they possess; but, while expressing their readiness to let us see the deer, they 'burke' the question of numbers.

'We possess seventeen hundred,' the old woman is understood to assert. This computation we take *cum grano*.

'Where are they?'

'Upon the fjell.'

We had already understood that a great portion of the herd was down in the encampment at the moment, having just been driven there for milking; and we remind our old friend of this.

'Well, yes,' she admits, 'that's true.'

Then she leads the way to the milking-place, informing us, in

answer to inquiries as to how many reindeer are congregated here, that 'there are too many to count.'

Taking advantage of a piece of ground covered sparsely with stunted birch trees, as the most advantageous for the purpose required, the Lapps have formed one of the usual inclosures. It consists of a circular *chevaux de frise*, formed of small birch trees woven into a rude sort of hedge, and measures about seventy feet in diameter, perhaps more. There are still standing many young birch trees in the inclosure, which serve the convenient purpose of posts, whereto the restless reindeer may be secured for milking.

On the way to this place the old lady has discoursed of the mode of bringing the deer down from the fjell; and if we may credit her, it is customary to instruct one of the dogs to go and fetch the beasts. The Lapp dog is a handsome animal, with the docility of any home pet, the intelligence of the collie, and the wild appearance of the wolf. These handsome animals require simply directions to drive-in so many animals; they start alone, and in the course of half an hour, more or less, as the occasion may demand, down they come to the encampment following a herd of reindeer of two or three hundred, or however many they may have succeeded in gathering together. Their intelligence is marvellous.

Who has not heard wonderful stories of the reindeer? How the Lapps harness them to their little *pulka*, or sledge, by a single thong passed between the animals' legs, and fastened to one of the great antlers; how, in this manner, they can accomplish a journey of two hundred miles in a day. This is a common legend, but it partakes a vast deal too much of the mar-

vellous; for the reindeer is unable to perform anything like so enormous a distance, nor is its pace so great as many writers have asserted. In fact, a great deal of poetical nonsense has been written about the creature. Without doubt, it is a vastly useful animal. It supplies milk, whence come butter and cheese; its flesh is sufficiently succulent to provide a tolerably palatable food, if properly treated; its hide will form a dress, a bed, or a pair of boots; and from its horns may be made knife-handles, or other useful articles. It is serviceable as a draught animal, as is well known, and is, indeed, to the Lapp so invaluable, that from it he manages to derive an existence—by the direct use of its produce, and by bartering for articles of necessity so much thereof as surpasses his needs.

It cannot be denied that the reindeer possesses manifold virtues, but it is a dirty and an intractable brute nevertheless. Try the experiment of driving a reindeer sledge, and see if the beast, when he succeeds in upsetting you, as he certainly will endeavour to do, does not immediately turn on you and do his utmost to rend you with his horns—which are exceedingly formidable weapons.

But let us follow the old woman who acts as our ‘guide,’ without being either ‘philosopher’ or ‘friend.’ She has lifted a bar in the hedge, by which we gain admission to the inclosure, and we are amongst the reindeer, which restlessly pace about, as though eager to be again at large out on the fjell amongst their favourite moss and snow, uttering meanwhile a peculiar grunt, as musical as that of the hog, which it much resembles. There is a pretty little Lapp song which this scene calls to mind:

‘ Spring min snälla ren,
Över berg och fält!
Vid min flicka’s tält
Fär du krafsa se ’n.
Ymnig mossä der
Under drifvan är.’

Swedish, however, is so little understood in England, that one must translate, if the song is to be made comprehensible. It runs very much thus:

‘ Dash, my noble beast,
Over mound and plain!
Dear one’s tent to gain.
Waits a plenteous feast
Ready where we go,
Moss beneath the snow.

Short now is the day
But the way is long!
Hurry with my song!
Let us speed away!
Rest we may not here,
Wolves there are to fear.’

The reindeer amongst which we find ourselves are good specimens of the animal. Some of the number are fine, handsome beasts, with tall, branching antlers that reach above one’s head; but mostly they are not so large, their size hardly exceeding that of a young calf. Many are a dun brown, shading off to white under the belly and round the head; but the greater proportion are of a peculiar mouse colour, relieved in the same manner with white. The hair is long and thick, in such dense masses on the creatures’ sides as to be of surprising softness. They certainly require a warm covering, for in the extreme of winter it frequently occurs that they must endure a coldness of temperature which, measured on the scale of Fahrenheit, would be represented by perhaps eighty degrees of frost. Such cold is of the most intense severity, but it is often reached in Swedish Lapland; it is, in fact, far colder there than on the north coast of Norway, where the sea is never frozen up; colder even than the very extreme north,

where the Arctic expeditions have wintered. The lowest temperature recorded in the meteorological register attached to Dr. Sutherland's account of the expedition under Mr. Penny, dispatched by the Admiralty in 1850, to search for traces of Sir J. Franklin, is only 41° below zero, or seventy-three degrees of frost. This was attained on the 24th of February, 1851.

The hair of the reindeer seems to be but indifferently fastened to the skin, and is perpetually falling off. The animal is, in fact, in a chronic state of moult; although not, of course, to such an extent as for it to be apparent, beyond the mere signs of loose hair on the ground. The inclosure was regularly strewn with hair.

The whole family of Lapps were engaged in the process of milking, and we had to be introduced to many members of the domestic circle whom we had not before had the pleasure and privilege of seeing. There was a scurrilous old man, who seemed to be the chief of the gang, a dissipated old rascal, if ever the world knew such a character. This old fellow even had a small amount of hair on his lip, which he, no doubt, imagined was a moustache; it gave one the idea, 'as Mr. Punch puts it, that he had swallowed his tooth-brush, and that it was bursting through the skin. The Lapps, as a rule, have no hair on their faces, and this old fellow was the first exception to the rule which I had seen. His stature, also, was far above the average, whence a suspicion arose that he could claim considerable of the Swede or Norwegian, as well as the Lapp, in his descent. One of the creatures, a young girl of fifteen, who was unfortunately lame, had a face which, as far as

could be discerned through a copious layer of dirt, might almost have been pretty. She was, certainly, an exception to the rule of Lappish aesthetics; for they are a most unmitigatedly ugly and unprepossessing race.

Our old friend, who had taken us under her charge, was an important personage in the milking inclosure, her duty consisting in lassoing the deer and tying them up ready for milking. The process of catching the animals is very pretty. The wary old woman prepares the rope in her black and shrivelled hands, casts a glance round the herd before singling out her victim; then, with a dexterous throw which seldom misses its aim, she flings the noose round the selected animal's horns, and, 'hauling in the slack,' has the reindeer a most secure prisoner. She then knots the rope about the animal's nose, and ties it firmly to a tree; after which she directs her attention to another member of the herd.

When an animal is secured, one of the other Lapps, either man or woman, carrying a dirty little wooden bowl having a long handle, approaches the captive, and commences the operation of milking; which, accompanied by many resounding slaps on the deer's udder, is a process of sufficient nastiness to provoke a sentiment much resembling disgust.

Each animal yields about half a pint of milk—a rich, unctuous liquid, thick and creamy. We tasted the produce of this herd; with what amount of relish I will not say, since we had seen the warm-fluid trickling over the grimy hands of the Lapps, from which it certainly received a modicum of dirt. I sipped for the sake of being able to say that I knew the flavour of reindeer milk;

but I was sincerely glad to forget the taste, by cramming my mouth full of berries of a less nauseous character than the lacteal compound.

Reindeer cream, I presume, does not exist, since the milk itself is so intensely thick; but the cheese—I cannot allude to it without a shudder. Goat's milk is frequently met with in mountainous districts; and I have even, in Heligoland, seen the milk of regular milch-sheep served with coffee; in Central Asia mare's milk is a recognised commodity; while asses' milk, I believe, is amongst us prescribed medicinally, but I am not acquainted with its flavour. I would I could say the same for reindeer milk!

When we had seen all that could interest us in this curious *kraal*, or *corral*, or *ranche*, or whatever it may be called in any civilized language, we retraced our steps to the encampment. There was amongst the party an excessively disreputable-looking Lapp, a young fellow with ophthalmic eyes and generally dissipated appearance, who now expressed a desire to accompany us back to Skallstugan. There was no reason apparent why we should object to his returning with us, if he so desired it; but, on the other hand, no possible reason could be assigned, and no combination of circumstances could be imagined, which would render his company desirable. As, however, he appeared really desirous of going back in our company, in order that we might present him with a gallon or so of schnapps, we made no objection.

'Then,' said he, with a coolness which certainly was striking, 'just wait a quarter of an hour, while I change my clothes, and I will go with you.'

He was attired, as most Lapps

are, in a frock of greasy skin and an unlimited quantity of dirt; what, therefore, the process of changing his dress might consist in, one was at some trouble to conjecture. Certainly, the desire to solve this problem was the only reason which induced us to accede to his very moderate request.

While waiting we returned to the larger *kata* of the two, and looked inside for our *vägvisare*. He was engaged in a discussion with a toothless old Lapp who was brewing coffee beside the fire. This old gentleman civilly invited us to enter his smoky abode, which we, with the utmost politeness, declined; he then, not to be accused of inhospitality, was good enough to suggest that we should join him at coffee. To this politeness we also returned a negative reply.

The skin *kata*, or tent of the Lapps, such as we saw here, is a habitation of sufficient discomfort, it must be conceded: the wooden building which one finds amongst the less migratory people farther north is perhaps less uninviting. In those luxurious buildings they have an arrangement for sleeping, which somewhat answers to our own idea of separate chambers. They place a board edge up across the floor, on one side of which sleep the males, on the other the females: an admirable and most effectual safeguard against immorality!

When our guide emerged from the tent, in which he had been enjoying himself with the ancient proprietor, so little had the smoke agreed with him that his eyes were red and moist, while he blinked in the less dim light like an owl in the sunshine. He appeared to be on especially intimate terms with the whole family, and was loth to quit their sweet society. When we proposed an

adjournment, he suggested that we had promised to wait for Johann, who was arranging his toilet.

'We allowed that worthy ragamuffin a quarter of an hour,' we explained, 'which he has already exceeded. He has been half an hour. Let us therefore start.'

The guide was very reluctant to move; but there were dollars at stake, and he must perforce do as we ordered: he accordingly slowly led the way downwards to the lake.

'Johann is not ready,' he said; 'and the gentlemen promised to wait.'

'Hang Johann. Let him catch us up. He can run, I suppose.'

'Bewars,'* answered the *vägvisare*, employing an atrocious combination of syllables, which conveys to the mind of a Swede the intelligible word, 'Certainly.'

But he was discontented, his feeble intellect being unable to assign to the condition punctuality any signification. What mattered whether we waited a quarter of an hour or two hours and a quarter? Poor benighted savage.

Descending by a path different to that by which we had reached the fjell, we passed, on the way to the lake, the boundary between the two kingdoms, Sweden and Norway. The Lapp encampment was in the latter country, just over the frontier. It was a bleak, dismal, and desolate scene, such as one seldom passes through; the intermittent rain-showers adding to the discomfort of such moist wildness, and rendering the marshy ground every moment more treacherous and unpleasant to traverse.

Far as the eye could reach, stretched boundless forests of pine and fir, with here and there patches of birch, and open pieces of bog and morass. Behind us lay the

snow-clad mountains, the summit of the fjell; below us was the great misty lake, towards which trickled many little meandering streams and runnels of crystal water, stealing between the bushes of juniper and *blabär*, on which the ripening berries hung in rich profusion, and affording a playground for the frogs, which now and again hopped across our path, or dived into the water with a resounding splash.

Of course the wretched Johann was so tardy that he failed to overtake us by the time we had reached the water's edge. We again waited, and even shouted to attract his attention, but without any other result than arousing a slumbering echo.

We had given the fellow sufficient grace, and our patience was exhausted. What is to be said of the man who keeps one waiting? I could say a great deal. He proves himself one of two things, both of which are sufficiently unpleasant—a person of no resolution or an utterer of untruths (not to use a harsher term). The first for fixing a time which it is beyond his feeble powers to accomplish; the second for mentioning a time which he does not intend to meet. On second thoughts, I am inclined to think he proves himself both. Oh, unpunctual ones, who keep others waiting, on whatsoever plea, lay the above flattering unction to thy souls! And now let us say no more about it.

Baron —— again acted as oarsman, in conjunction with the guide, under whose united efforts we made some way over the leaden water. But we were hardly a hundred yards from the shore when an answering shout was heard in the distance to the cry of 'Johann!' and the figure of the Lapp was seen descending towards the lake.

* Pronounced *Berosh*.

The oarsmen ceased to row, while something resembling a council of war was actually held, as to whether we should put back, and receive on board the unpunctual Johann.

The professor was inclined to stop; the baron was indifferent. Of course the *vägvisare* was anxious to take his friend on board, but his wish went for nothing. I opposed, in the strongest manner possible, any notion of returning for so ungrateful a reprobate; and I record, with unalloyed pleasure, the fact that my motion was eventually carried, and that we again made way, leaving grimy Johann frantically gesticulating on the bank, and uttering all sorts of unavailing adjurations for our return.

'He no doubt has got wet in this rain,' said I, to comfort the guide. 'He might catch cold sitting in this damp boat. Is there any road by which he could walk to Skallstugan?'

'Bewars,' murmured the guide, despondently. 'He can tramp through the marsh on the lake's edge.'

'Then let him tramp,' said I; 'an excellent mode of testing whether his boots are waterproof.'

This lively sally did not appear to exhilarate the guide, I regret to say; on the contrary, he seemed rather aggrieved thereby. They are an incomprehensible people, these Scandinavians. However, it is proverbial that they have no conception of a joke.

The only consolation we could offer to the *vägvisare* was that, on our arrival again at Skallstugan, we would provide a certain quantity of schnapps, to await the coming of Johann, should he take the trouble to follow us; for, of course, he had no other object in view than procuring further means of intoxication in addition to the

money which we had already distributed in the camp.

Amongst the many characteristic stories which are current concerning the Lapps, is one which relates to an old man who had sent for a doctor to visit his camp.

'What, surely you are not ill, old Jacob?' said the doctor.

'Nay, master, nay, I am well enough,' replied Jacob, with a sorrowful face. 'It is far worse.'

'What! not your handsome daughter?' continued the doctor.

'No, no; it is far worse,' said old Jacob, moaning and rocking himself in his seat, like an ill-regulated pendulum working upside down.

'Your wife, then?' quoth the doctor. 'Let me see her.'

'Worse, worse,' muttered Jacob, disconsolately.

'What! worse than your wife or your daughter?' exclaimed the incredulous doctor. 'Who is it, then?'

The old Lapp wiped a tear from his ancient eye, as he mournfully replied,

'My horse, my horse. Oh! save him, doctor! Save my horse!'

There is something almost ludicrous in this touching story; but it is, nevertheless, a fact that the affection which a Lapp bears for his horse is, occasionally, really marvellous. They are clever and plucky little animals, there is no doubt; and were I to institute a comparison between the horse and the Lapp, I fancy the former would come out considerably the better of the two.

With damp feet and gigantic appetites, we arrived back in sight of the grass-grown roofs of Skallstugan, under which we were not sorry again to find ourselves; neither did we regret being provided with a change of boots and such refection as the hospitable landlady could lay before us.

MY GRANDMOTHER.

THE look, the light, the sparkling mien,
 The glow, the bloom of sweet sixteen
 Radiant from every feature,
 A living beauty in the face,
 A more than painter's pictured grace—
What was the bonny creature?

'*Depinxit* seventeen seventy-two,'
 So runs the epigraph : but who
 The artist ; or his sitter,
 What she was then no word to tell :
 Her name, her birth, both know I well,
 For she—yet seems it fitter,

To fancy that I now behold
While gazing on those locks of gold,
Some bright immortal being
Dowered with the gift of deathless youth,
Than own the dull domestic truth,
And tell myself I'm seeing—

An erewhile habitant of earth
Of human substance, mortal birth,
In yonder picture pendant.
From yonder oaken wainscot worn,
A woman, and of woman born—
And I—just her descendant.

Ah, grandame mine ! when first did care
Wrinkle that smooth brow pictured there,
When darkened first life's landscape fair ?
For as I gaze, it rather
Seems right, methinks, that in our race
We each should change our lineal place,
And I, oh maid of sunny face !
Grizzled and grey, and void of grace,—
And I be your grandfather !

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

THE PARSON'S WIFE.

OF the lives open to married women there is none so nearly professional as that of the parson's wife. The wives of other men, as a rule, not only have no share in their husbands' work, but expect none. In the houses of the doctor, the merchant, and the lawyer there is a locked chamber, the key of which does not hang upon the household bunch, and the thought of asking for it would be an impracticable fancy, if not an impertinence. But the parson's wife, when she accepts his home, aspires also to be a partner in his calling. Tradition has assigned her certain functions beyond the bounds of the drawing-room and the nursery; and she leaves her father's roof full of busy plans for outdoor ministrations. Courts and marts may be to other women as distant lands of fable; but the parish is a field no farther than the garden gate, whose every corner may be explored. In another home there would be a sanctum with sealed books, secret drawers, and unintelligible apparatus; but the rectory-study lies open, and none of its gentle mysteries are forbidden. This professional freedom is felt to be a set-off to many social drawbacks. And certainly the understanding on the part of the parson's wife that she shall be admitted behind the scenes is very often encouraged by the attitude of the parson himself. There is a business-like air in his love-making which portends a division of labour. The threads of his new work have become entangled, and some of the knots need delicate handling. He is shy with the schoolmistress, shyer still with the cottagers' young wives; expressions of interest in rheumatic experiences do not come easily,

and his ill-timed restoratives have thrown more than one convalescent into a relapse. The school-maidens hang their heads at his approach; their hymns hang fire in the church. He feels that he is scarcely an authority in the choice of club-blankets, and the tracts of the lending-library are more perplexing than his own folios. Friendly neighbours whisper marriage in his ear; and, that the hint may not be too startling, link it artfully with the 'working' of the parish. Therefore the pastor plays the lover with a divided gaze, and whilst one eye pleads feebly for himself, the other rests anxiously on the fold. He is Cœlebs in search of a wife, and a yoke-fellow to boot.

She, on her side, has many of the privileges of his office, and none of the restraints. She has taken no vows, owes obedience to none beside her lord, cannot be cited or charged, and knows not what it is to be vexed by rubrics and rural deans. Her opinions may be formed without study, and taught without a commission; are subject to no tests, and cannot be suppressed by petition or appeal. Like a king she can do no wrong, and has the further privilege that she cannot be deposed.

It is hardly, perhaps, to be expected that the professional life of the parson's wife should be free from professional faults. We must be prepared for a little official self-assertion and onesidedness. She is apt to imagine that the life of the parish radiates from the rectory, and that its households may be inspected like the school copy-books. Her eye is often too quick, her memory too retentive, her judgment hasty, her censure too severe. Favouritism is almost

an inseparable accident of her nature. Her zeal sometimes outruns her charity, even to the point of bracketing the dissenting chapel with the public-house in her list of parish nuisances. The shortcomings of all the village households are known to her, and from her place in church she cannot help observing the empty seats, the nodding heads of the men, the gay ribbons of the women. And the result of all this vigilance is a certain fussiness of manner, little managing superintending ways, and an air of general responsibility for the neighbourhood. Nor has she that disinterestedness and singleness of aim which secure for her husband a more patient following. There is an old leaven of worldliness beneath her studied homeliness. She cannot, like him, disengage herself from the smaller politics of the parish. Her ear is more open to the petty talk, scandals and divisions of neighbouring homes; and with her to listen is at once to take sides. She is not so easily transplanted to a new soil, and clings more fondly to the traditions of her family and birthplace. Hence a hesitation in her advances towards inferiors, and an uneasiness of attitude, half-defiant, half-submissive, towards the local powers that be. There is a conflict between social prejudices and missionary aims. It slumbers for a time, perhaps, after the first shock, but it wakes again when the sons and daughters grow up, and the conventional boundaries have to be laid down for them, which were laid down for her own youth. She has to serve two altars, and the strain brings out the weak points in the union of the parts of the modern lady and the 'devout woman' of Apostolic times.

It may be objected further that the parson's wife, on the strength

of the title, is sometimes a little too ambitious as a fellow-worker. It is not enough for one of this restless order to have the direction of minor matters in parish life; she must have a part and a voice in the graver work of the church. There is no question on which she is not prepared to pass judgment. The reflection that she may be altogether wanting in the temper of mind and training needed for this semi-authoritative dealing with the hard problems of the day, is one that does not trouble her. She pronounces very emphatically on questions of ritual, education, and church government. The Ministers and their measures, the Bishops and their appointments, the Houses of Convocation and their decrees —on all these she will take up her parable as one who has a right to speak. A story is told of a candidate for priest's orders who stated in confidence to the bishop that his rector was the main obstacle in his work. There are, we suspect, some enduring deacons who, with a little encouragement, would not let the rector bear the whole charge.

But it is as the champion of orthodoxy that the parson's wife is seen on her weakest side. For why, we are ready to ask, should she venture into the risky field of controversy, when she is so unassailable at home? There is a persuasive force in the lives of the saints which is not always found in their arguments. Women have the same quiet eloquence of action, but in the parson's wife it is as often marred by a feeble fencing with words. Dissent from one of her cherished beliefs, or only hesitate in assenting, and in a moment she is up in arms, and arms, too often, which she has not proved; mere pulpit echoes of which she has grasped little more than the sound. To her mind all doubt is dishonest, inquiry pre-

sumption, and a suspended judgment simply unintelligible. She can see no strength in a hostile creed, no beauty in a worship different from her own. Confess to reading a sceptical book or having a heterodox friend, and she shakes her head gloomily as for one in the nethermost pit. Indeed her aim is often, it would seem, not so much to make you a convert as to prove you a heretic, with a shrewd hope that the odium of the name will drive you to her side. The indirect power thus brought to bear is sometimes very great. Free-thinking and outspoken enough on other topics, the country layman feels a strange timidity in her presence on non-sectarian ground. He has to do with an uncompromising watcher, and he knows that there is a chorus of matrons in the background who will take up the tale, and go through all her gesticulations of horror and alarm. It is curious to see how he will sometimes make no secret of moral transgressions, but be at the greatest pains to conceal any divergence in matters of faith. The reticence which is the effect is not undesirable, but it is doubtful whether as much can be said of the means by which it is produced.

But no one will deny that the parson's wife has a more than compensating list of virtues, and her difficult, delicate, self-imposed labours seem to give her more than a woman's claim to indulgence. She is a borderer between the lay and clerical worlds, partaking of the natures of both, and softening the points of variance and contrast in each. In her the preacher's ideals take visible form, and are brought nearer to our week-day level. Her voice is not always at Sunday-pitch, and she can hold forth on many common matters of life which lie out of

pulpit range. Her foot-notes help out the hard text, and simple folk learn from them how to order their houses, to train their children, and to care for their servants. She leads the thin ranks of the actively benevolent; her charity is something more than donation by deputy, and an occasional peep from the threshold at the households of the poor. Hers is the sympathy of contact; for there are no concerns so small that she will not interest herself in them. A goodly store has she of wise hints and cunning recipes, books and pictures for the fireside, and comforts for the sick room. She is the patroness of native talent in singing, sewing, cooking, and gardening; the friend at court through whom the girls and lads may be helped to their first places. She is a keeper of many secrets, and sometimes a letter from the colonies shows that the old confidence has not been forgotten. As years roll on she becomes the annalist of uneventful lives, whose only chronicles are the registers and tombstones; keeping an unwritten record of small facts out of which to draw wise words for after generations. Who, again, so enterprising in setting on foot schemes for amusement and improvement; school-feasts and concerts, winter readings and harvest festivals? Her trim garden and tiny drawing-room show a larger hospitality than many a park and hall. In society she is not always very clever or very learned, but always ready to make friends, and a good listener. In short, as giving tone and stimulus to village homes by a zealous interest in their small fortunes, and as the common friend and agent in good works of richer, more secluded neighbours, the parson's wife does not a little towards maintaining the old healthy country life of England.

NO INTENTIONS.

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,' 'VERONIQUE, ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. CRAY is a hard-featured, angular woman, with rather a defiant cast of countenance, but she obeys the summons to the housekeeper's room promptly enough, bringing a huge basket, the emblem of her trade, which is that of a laundress, beneath her arm.

'And pray what may you be doing in the kitchen at this time of day, Mrs. Cray?' commences Mrs. Quekett, uncovering the kidneys.

'I'm doing what it would be well as every one did, mum—minding my own business.'

'Don't speak to me in that tone of voice. You can't have any business here on Tuesday, unless you neglected to send the servants' things home in time again last week.'

'No, mum, I didn't neglect to send the servants' things home in time again last week,' replies Mrs. Cray, with insolent repetition, 'and my business here to-day is to get the money that's due to me; and if that ain't my business, I'm sure I don't know what is. There's three weeks owing, and I'm sure it can't be by the Colonel's wish that a poor hard-working creature as I am is kept waiting day after day in this manner.'

'It's your own fault if you are. I've told you several times that if you want your bill paid, you must come up between seven and eight every Saturday evening, and fetch the money.'

'And I've told you, mum, that I can't do it; and if you had six

children to wash and put to bed, beside grown sons a-coming home for their suppers, and the place to ruddle up, and all with one pair of hands, you couldn't do it neither.'

'What's your niece about that she can't help you?'

Mrs. Cray looks sulky directly.

'A hulking young woman like that!' continues the housekeeper, with her mouth full of toast and kidney, 'idling about the village, and doing nothing to earn her living. I am quite surprised you should put up with it. Why don't she come up for the money? I suppose she can read and write?'

'Oh, she can read and write fast enough—better than many as thinks themselves above her—but she can't come up of Saturdays, for a very good reason—that she ain't here.'

'Not here! Where is she gone to?'

'That's her business, mum, and not ours. Not but what I'm put out about it, I must own; but she was always a one to have her own way, she was, and I suppose it will be so to the end.'

'Her own way, indeed; and a nice way she's likely to make of it, tramping about the country by herself. You should take better care of her, Mrs. Cray.'

Now, Mrs. Cray, a virago at home and abroad, has one good quality—she can stick up for her own relations; and Mrs. Quekett's remark upon her niece's propensity for rambling raises all her feelings in defence of the absent.

'She's as well able to look after

herself, my niece is, as many that wear silken gowns upon their backs—ay, and better too. Take more care of her, indeed! It's all very well to give good advice, but them as preaches had better practise. That's what I say!'

'I don't know what you mean,' says Mrs. Quekett, who knows so well that the glass of porter she is lifting to her lips jingles against her false teeth.

'Well, if you don't know, mum, I don't know who should. Anyways, I want my three weeks' money, and I stays here till I gets it.'

'You shall not have a sixpence until you learn to keep a civil tongue in your head.'

'Then I shall have to send my Joel up to talk to the Colonel about it.'

'He will not see the Colonel unless I give him permission. You're a disgrace to the village—you and your family—and the sooner Priestley is quit of the lot of you the better.'

'Oh, it's no talking of yours, mum, as will turn us out, though you do think yourself so much above them as wouldn't stoop to eat with you. There's easy ways for some people to get riches in this world; but we're not thieyes yet, thank God, nor shan't begin to be, even though there are some who would keep honest folks out of the money they've lawfully earned.'

Conceive Mrs. Quekett's indignation.

'How dare you be so insolent?' she exclaims, all the blood in her body rushing to her face. It requires something more than the assumption of superiority to enable one to bear an inferior's insult with dignity.

Mrs. Quekett grows as red as a turkey-cock.

'Insolent!' cries Mrs. Cray.

'Why, what do you call talking of my niece after that fashion, then? Do you think I've got no more feeling for my own flesh and blood than you have yourself?'

'Mary!' screams Mrs. Quekett from the open door, 'go upstairs at once and fetch me the washing-book that lies on the side table in my bedroom.'

'Oh yes, your bedroom, indeed!' continues the infuriated laundress. 'I suppose you think as we don't know why you've got the best one in the house, and not a word said to you about it. You couldn't tell no tales, you couldn't, about the old man as is dead and gone, nor the young 'un as wears his shoes; only you dursn't to, because you're all tarred with the same brush. You thinks yourself a lady as may call poor folks bad names; but the worst name as you ever give a body would be too good for yourself.'

All of which vituperation is bawled into the housekeeper's ears by Mrs. Cray's least dulcet tones, whilst Mrs. Cray's hard-working fists are placed defiantly upon her hips. By the time Mary returns with the washing-book Mrs. Quekett is trembling all over.

'Take your money, woman,' she says, in a voice which fear has rendered wonderfully mild, compared to that of her opponent, 'and never let me see your face, nor the face of any one that belongs to you again.'

'That's as it may be,' retorts Mrs. Cray; 'and, any way, we're not beholden to you, nor any such dirt, for our living.'

'You'll never get it here again. Not a bit of washing goes over the threshold to your house from this time forward, and I'll dismiss any servant who dares to disobey me!'

'Oh, you needn't fear, mum, as I'll ask 'em. There's other washing in Leicestershire, thank God! beside the Court's; and, as for your own rags, I wouldn't touch 'em if you were to pay me in gold. You'll come to want yourself before long, and be glad to wash other people's clothes to earn your bread; and I wish I may live to see it!' With which final shot, Mrs. Cray pockets her money, shoulders her basket, and marches out of Fen Court kitchen.

This interview has quite upset the housekeeper, who leaves more than half her luncheon on the table, and goes upstairs to her bedroom, in order to recover her equanimity.

'Serve her right,' is the verdict of the kitchen, while Mary finishes the kidneys and porter and repeats the laundress's compliments *verbatim*.

'I'd have given something to hear Mother Cray pitch into the old cat.'

'Only hope it'll spoil her dinner.'

'No fear of that. She'd eat if she was dying.'

And so on, and so on; the general feeling for the housekeeper being that of detestation.

It takes longer than usual for Mrs. Quekett to calm her ruffled dignity, for she is unaware how much the servants have overheard of the discussion between her and Mrs. Cray, nor how much they will believe of it. So she remains upstairs for more than an hour; and when she descends again she has changed her dress; for in a black satin gown, with a blonde lace cap ornamented with pink flowers, who amongst the lower menials would presume to question either her authority or her virtue?

She does not forget what has passed, however. It returns upon

her every now and then during the afternoon, with an unpleasant feeling of insecurity; and when —the Court dinner being concluded—she makes her way up to Colonel Mordaunt's private sitting-room, she is just in the mood to make herself very disagreeable. The room in question is called the study, though it is very little study that is ever accomplished within its walls; but it is here that the Colonel usually sits in the evening, smoking his pipe, looking over the stable and farm accounts, and holding interviews with his head groom, kennel-keeper and bailiff.

He does not seem over and above pleased at the abrupt entrance of Mrs. Quekett; but he glances up from his newspaper and nods.

'Well, Quekett! have you anything to say to me? Time to settle the housekeeping bills again, eh?'

'No, Colonel. If I remember rightly, we settled those only last week,' replies Mrs. Quekett, as she quietly seats herself in the chair opposite her master. 'My business here is something quite different. I want to put a question to you, Colonel. I want to know if it's true that you've asked Master Oliver down to Fen Court for Easter this year?'

Why, doesn't Colonel Mordaunt act as nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand would have acted under similar circumstances? Why doesn't he resent the impertinence of this inquiry by the curt but emphatic remark, 'What the d——l is that to you?'

He is not a timid, shrinking creature like his sister: he could talk glibly enough, and plead his own cause bravely enough, when in the presence of Irene St. John;

what remembrance, what knowledge is it that comes over him when confronted with this menial, that he should twist his paper about to hide his countenance, and answer, almost evasively:

'Well, Quekett, I did think of asking him! It would only be for a few days. There's no objection, is there?'

'I think there's a very great objection, Colonel. Master Oliver's not a gentleman as I can get on with at all. The house is not like itself whilst he's hanging about it, with his bad manners, and his tobacco, and his drink.'

'Come, come, Quekett, I think you're a little hard upon the boy. Think how young he is, and under what disadvantages he has laboured! He is fond of his pipe and his nonsense, I know; but it doesn't go too far; you'll allow that.'

'I don't allow nothing of the sort, Colonel. I think Master Oliver's "nonsense," as you call it, goes a great deal too far. He's an ill-mannered, impertinent, puny upstart—that's my opinion—as wants a deal of bringing down; and he'll have it one day, if he provokes me too far; for as sure as my name's Rebecca Quekett, I'll let him know that—'

'Hush!' says Colonel Mordaunt, in a prolonged whisper, as he rises and examines the door to see if it is fast shut. 'Quekett, my good creature! you forget how loud you are talking.'

'Oh! I don't forget it, Colonel. I've too good a memory for that. And don't you set Oliver on to me, or I may raise my voice a little louder yet.'

'I set him on! How can you think so? I have never spoken to him of you but in terms of the greatest respect. If I thought Oliver really meant to be rude to you, I should be exceedingly angry

with him. But it is only his fun!'

'Well, whether it's fun or earnest, I don't mean to put up with it any more, Colonel; so, if Oliver is to come here next Easter, I shall turn out. Lady Baldwin will be only too glad to have me for the season: I had a letter from her on the subject as late as last week.'

Colonel Mordaunt dreads the occasional visits which Mrs. Quekett pays to her titled patronesses. She never leaves the Court, except in a bad temper. And when Mrs. Quekett is in a bad temper, she is very apt to be communicative on the subject of her fancied wrongs. And tittle-tattle, for many reasons, Colonel Mordaunt systematically discountenances.

'You mustn't talk of that, Quekett. What should we do without you? You are my right hand!'

'I don't know about that, sir. I have had my suspicions lately that you're looking out for another sort of a right hand, beside me.'

Colonel Mordaunt starts with surprise, and colours. The housekeeper's sharp eyes detect his agitation.

'I'm not so far wrong, am I, Colonel? The post-bag can tell tales, though it hasn't a tongue. And I shall be obliged if you'll let me have the truth, that I may know how I am expected to act.'

'What do you mean, Quekett? I don't understand you.'

'Oh, yes, you do, Colonel; but I'll put it plainer, if you like. Are you thinking of marrying?'

'Really, Quekett, you are so—'

'Lord alive, man!' exclaims the housekeeper, throwing off all restraint; 'you can't pretend not to understand me at your age.'

You must be thinking of it, or not thinking of it. What do all those letters to Miss St. John mean, if you're not courting her? There's as many as three a week, if there's one; and when a man's come to your time of life he don't write letters for mere pleasure—'

'No, Quekett, no; but business, you know—business must be attended to. And I was left a sort of guardian to my young cousin, so—'

'Fiddle-de-dee!' is the sharp rejoinder. 'You can't stuff me up with such nonsense, Colonel. Are you going to marry this lady, or not?'

'Going! No, certainly not going, Quekett.'

'But do you *want* to marry her? Do you mean to ask her?'

'Well, the thought has crossed my mind, I must say. Not but everything is very uncertain, of course—very uncertain.'

'Oh!' says the housekeeper, curtly; and is silent.

'Quekett,' resumes her master, after a pause, 'if it *should* be, you know, it could make no difference to you; could it? It would be rather pleasanter, on the whole. Fen Court is a dull place at times, very dull; and you and Isabella are not the best of friends. A young lady would brighten up the house, and make it more cheerful for us all. Don't you think so?'

'Oh, much more cheerful, doubtless,' is the sarcastic reply. 'And, pray, Colonel, may I ask, in case of this very desirable event taking place, what you intend to do about Master Oliver?'

'About my—nephew?'

'About your—*nephew*; yes. Is he to be allowed to spend his holidays at the Court, as usual, upsetting our comfort, and turning the house topsy-turvy?'

'Well, I've hardly thought of

that, Quekett. I suppose it would be as—as—she wished.'

'Oh! very well, Colonel. I understand you: and if Fen Court is to be given over to a boy and girl like that, why, the sooner I'm out of it the better. It's hard enough that I should have to look for another home at my time of life; but it would be harder to stay and have a young mistress and master put over my head. Fifteen years I lived with your poor dear father, Colonel, and never a word with any of the family; and when I consented to come here, it was on the express condition, as you may well remember, that—'

'Stay, Quekett; not so fast. I have only told you what I contemplated doing. Nothing is settled yet, nor likely to be; and if I thought it would annoy you, why, you know, Quekett, for my father's sake, and—and various other reasons, how highly we all esteem your services; and I should be most concerned if I thought anything would part us. Even if I do marry, I shall take care that everything with respect to yourself remains as it has ever done; and as for Master Oliver, why, I'll write at once and tell him it is not convenient he should come here at Easter. He wished to visit us this year; but nothing is of more importance to me than your comfort, nor should be, after the long period during which you have befriended my father and myself. Pray be easy, Quekett. Since you desire it, Master Oliver shall not come to Fen Court.'

The housekeeper is pacified: she rises from her seat with a smile.

'Well, Colonel, I am sure it will be for the best, both for Master Oliver and ourselves. And as for your marriage, all I can say is, I wish you good luck!'

"Tisn't just what I expected; but I know you too well to believe you'd let anything come between us after so many years together."

And more than ever certain of her power over the master of Fen Court, Mrs. Quekett bids him a gracious good-night, and retires to her own room.

When the door has closed behind her, Colonel Mordaunt turns the key, and, leaning back in his chair, delivers himself over to thought. Painful thought, apparently; for more than once he takes out his handkerchief, and passes it over his brow. He sits thus for more than an hour, and when he rises to seek his own apartment his countenance is still uneasy and perturbed.

'Poor Oliver!' he thinks, as he does so. 'Poor unhappy boy! what can I do to rectify the errors of his life, or put hope in the future for him? Never have I so much felt my responsibility. If it were not for Irene, I could almost—but, no, I cannot give up that hope yet, not until she crushes it without a chance of revival; and then, perhaps—well, then I shall feel unhappy and desperate enough to defy Old Nick himself.'

Colonel Mordaunt does not say all this rhodomontade: he only thinks it; and if all our thoughts were written down, the world would be surprised to find how dramatically it talks to itself. It is only when we are called upon to clothe our thoughts with language that vanity steps in to make us halt and stammer. If we thought less of what others think of us, and more of what we desire to say, we should all speak more elegantly, if not grammatically. O vanity! curse of mankind—extinguisher to so many noble purposes: how many really brilliant minds stop short of ex-

cellency, stifled out of all desire for improvement, or idea of its possibility, by your suffocating breath! Why, even here is a platitude into which my vanity has betrayed me: but for the sake of its moral I will leave it.

'But why choose Mrs. Cavendish, with her heap of children, in that dull suburban house? You will be bored out of your life.'

How often have those words of Colonel Mordaunt returned during the last six months, upon Irene St. John's mind!

How intolerable have the children, the governess, the suburban society (the very worst of all society!), the squabbles, the tittle-tattle, the eternal platitudes, become to her! Acquaintances who 'drop in' whenever they feel so disposed, and hear nothing new between the occasions of their 'dropping in,' are the most terrible of all domestic scourges; the celebrated dropping of a drop of water on the victim's head, or King Solomon's 'droppings' on the window-pane, are metaphors which grow feeble in comparison! Irritating to a strong mind, what do they not become to that which has been enfeebled by suffering? And Irene's mind, at this juncture, is at its lowest ebb. From having gone as a visitor to her aunt's house, she has come to look upon it as her home; for after the first few weeks, Mrs. Cavendish, pleased with her niece's society, proposed she should take up her residence at Norwood, paying her share of the household expenses. What else had the girl to do? What better prospect was there in store for her? Friendless, alone, and half heart-broken, it had seemed at first as though in this widowed house, where the

most discordant sound that broke the air was the babble of the children's voices, she had found the refuge from the outer world she longed for. Her father and mother were gone. Eric Keir was gone; everything she cared for in this life was gone. She had but one desire—to be left in peace with memory—so Irene believed on first returning from Brussels to England. But such a state of mind is unnatural to the young, and cannot last for ever. By the time we meet her again, she is intolerant of the solitude and quiet. It does not soothe—it makes her restless and unhappy—that is because she has ceased to bewail the natural grief. Heaven takes care of its own, and with each poison sends an antidote; and the unnatural pain—the pain that this world's injustice has forced upon her, is once more in the ascendant, crushing what is best and softest in her nature.

There is no more difficult task for the pen than to describe, faithfully and credibly, the interior working of a fellow-creature's mind; for it is only those who have passed through the phase of feeling written of, that will believe in it. And yet it is not necessary to draw from one's own experience for life pictures. An artist desirous to illustrate a scene of suffering and sorrow, need not have suffered and have sorrowed, but goes boldly amongst the haunts where such things are (it is not far to go) until he finds them: so must the author, to be realistic, possess the power to read men's hearts and characters, to work out the mysterious problem of the lives and actions that often lie so widely severed—to account for the strange union of smiling lips and aching hearts—of the light morning jest and the bitter midnight sobbing.

There is no more curious study than that of psychology. O! the wonderful contradictions; the painful inconsistencies; the wide, wide gulf that is fixed between our souls and the world. It is enough to make one believe in M. Rowel's theory that hell consists in being made transparent. One can scarcely determine which would be worse—to have one's own thoughts laid bare, or to see through one's friends.

Irene St. John's soul is a puzzle, even to herself. The first dead weight of oppression that followed her mother's burial lifted from her mind, the blank sense of nothingness dispersed, she wakes to find the necessity for restraint withdrawn, and (as she told Colonel Mordaunt) the old grief pressing her down so hardly, she has no strength to cope with it.

Mistress of herself, free to think, and act, and look as her heart dictates, she has leisure to contemplate and dissect and analyse the haunting query, 'Why?' Why did Eric Keir seek her company—why ask her friendship—why intimate, if not assert, he loved her?

Was the fault on her side? Had she given him too much encouragement—been too pleased to meet him—talk to him, answer the tender questioning of his eyes? Or had he a design against her? Was he really so cold-hearted, so shallow, so deceitful, as to affect a part to ensure the empty triumph of winning her—for nothing. In fancy, with glowing cheek and bright feverish eyes, she traces again and again each scene in that sad episode of her existence, until she reaches the culminating point, and hears once more her mother's words, 'He means nothing by it all;' and the glow dies out to be replaced by pallor.

And then comes the last question of the anguished spirit—the question that rises to so many white lips every day, 'Why does Heaven permit such unnecessary pain? Is there really a Father-heart up there above, beating for and with our own?' I have said that this woman is no weak creature, ready to sink to the earth beneath the first blow from Fate's mallet.

Does this phase of her character belie the assertion? I think not. Strong bodies fight and struggle with the disease under which weak frames succumb, and muscular souls wrestle with and writhe under an affliction which feeble souls may suffer but not feel.

When Irene St. John had her mother to support as well as herself, she stood upright and smiled; now that the incentive for action is withdrawn, she bends before the tempest. Then she suffered more acutely; now she suffers more continuously; but acute suffering, with intervals of numbness, is more tolerable than continuous pain borne in monotony. There is nothing now to stir Irene up—to deaden the echo of the question reverberating against the walls of her empty heart; to blind her eyes mercifully to the fact that she has delivered herself over to a love that is not mutual; and that do all she will, she cannot stamp the accursed remembrance from her mind.

She knows all this; it is in black and white upon her soul; she is lowered, degraded, contemptible in her own eyes, and life becomes more intolerable with each rising sun.

It is May before Colonel Mordaunt dares to revert to the proposal he made Irene St. John in

Brussels. He has written frequently to her; he has seen her more than once, but there has been a quiet dignity about the girl which forbids him to break the compact they had entered on. He felt, without being told, that to do so would be to mar all his chances of success; so he has only paid Mrs. Cavendish two or three ordinary visits, offered Irene two or three ordinary presents (which she has quietly rejected), and tried to wait patiently until the six months' probation agreed upon should be completed. When it is, Colonel Mordaunt feels as free to speak as he had felt bound before to hold his tongue; now he knows that he will be listened to and answered. For Irene, amongst many other virtues, has no young-lady mannerisms about her, but is, in the best sense of the word, a Woman.

It is a warm, soft afternoon in the latter part of May; the little garden at Norwood is full of syringa and laburnum and lilac blossoms; and the voices of the children playing at hide-and-seek amongst the bushes come pleasantly in at the opened windows. Mrs. Cavendish has left the house to call upon some friend, and Irene and Colonel Mordaunt are alone.

'I hope you received your dividends all right this quarter,' he commences by saying; for since her orphanhood he has taken sole charge of her small income.

'O, yes! thank you. I sent your cheque to the bank, and there was no difficulty about the matter. You are most punctual in your payments.'

'Will you be as punctual, Irene? You have not forgotten, have you? what you promised to give me in May?'

The colour mounts to her pure pale face, but she does not turn it from him.

'Your answer! Oh, no! how could I forget it? Only I wish—I wish you could have guessed it, Colonel Mordaunt, without giving me the pain of repeating what I said before.'

His countenance falls.

'Are your feelings, then, quite unchanged? Have you no kindlier thoughts of me than you had then?'

'How could any thoughts be kindlier than they have been, or more grateful? But kindly thoughts and gratitude are—are not love, Colonel Mordaunt.'

'Then you are not yet cured of the old wound, Irene?'

The girl leans her cheek against the window-sill, and gazes with languid, heavy eyes into the open space beyond.

'For God's sake! don't speak of it!'

But he continues.

'Six months' reflection has not had the power to convince you that the most mortifying of all enterprises is the attempt to regain our influence over an errant heart.'

'I have never attempted to regain it,' she exclaims, indignantly. 'I would not take it were it offered me. I have done with the name and the thought of the thing, *for ever!*'

She looks so beautiful—so strangely as she did of old, with the hot, angry colour rising and falling in her face, that he is more than ever eager to win her for himself.

'Then, Irene! what are you waiting for? My home is open to you: why not accept it? I am sure you are not happy here.'

'O! I am well enough! The children bored me at first; but I am getting used to them, as I am to everything else,' with a deep sigh.

'I cannot believe you, Irene.

You, who have been accustomed, both during your father's and mother's lifetime, to be feted and amused, and carried hither and thither; you cannot be contented to spend your days in this small, dull cottage, with no better company than your aunt and her governess, and her over-grown boys. It cannot go on, my child; it will kill you!'

'I am tougher than you think. I wish that I were not.'

'You are bearing up wonderfully, but you will break down at last. Come, Irene! let me reason with you! You acknowledged just now that all you desire is to forget this disappointment. Why not try to forget it in my house as well as in this?'

She shudders—slightly—but he sees it.

'Colonel Mordaunt! it is impossible!'

'I cannot see the impossibility. I know that you are not in love with me, but I am content to be in love with you. I am content to make you mistress of my fortune and my house, and everything I possess, in return for yourself. It is a fair bargain—if you will but subscribe to it.'

'O! it is not fair. You do not know what you are agreeing to—how terribly you might feel it afterwards.'

'I am willing to take the risk.'

She hesitates a moment; it is very sweet to a woman to feel she is loved so entirely and recklessly and devotedly, that her possession is the only one thing in this world that her lover acknowledges worth living for. It is sweet to be loved, even when we can give nothing in return. A selfish satisfaction that has no part nor lot in the first requirement of the divine passion—self abnegation; but still it falls soothingly upon the wounded spirit that has been rudely thrust

from its legitimate resting-place. It is not so sweet as loving, but it is the next best thing, and Irene feels gratitude, and hesitation. After all—can any change make her position worse than it is now?

Colonel Mordaunt sees the hesitation and—forgets the shudder which preceded it!

'Irene! my dearest girl! think of what I say.' You imagine that life is over for you; that it can never have any charm again; that it will be all the same if you pass the remainder of it here, or anywhere! Then come to me! Fen Court, at the least, is as comfortable a home as Laburnum Cottage; here you are but a guest, there you will be a mistress: and have—may I not say it?—as devoted a friend as any you will find in Norwood! Will you not come?'

He pleads with as much earnestness as though he had been young; his fine face lighted up as only Love can light up a man's countenance, and his firm hands closed upon her own. The day is nearly won. It is on her very lips to answer 'yes,' when, from beyond the garden-gates, comes the sound of that most irrepressible of acclimatisations, the Italian organ, and the air it murders is that of the 'Blue Danube' waltzes.

'No!—no!' cries Irene as both hands wrench themselves away from his and go up with startling energy to shut out the maddening strains; 'you *must* not—you *shall* not ask me that again. I have told you that it is *impossible!*' and with that leaves him to himself.

Colonel Mordaunt is bitterly disappointed: he had made so sure, he can hardly say why, that this final appeal would be crowned with success, that the girl's determinate refusal comes on him like a great blow. He can hardly

believe that he will really lose her—that she will not return and tell him it was a mistake; and in that belief he still lingers about the cottage—futilely.

Mrs. Cavendish returns and begs him to remain to tea, but he declines, with thanks. The opportunity for speaking to Irene by herself is over, and he is not likely to derive any further benefit from seeing her in the presence of the governess and children. So he returns to his hotel for the night, not having quite made up his mind whether he shall bid the inmates of the cottage a formal farewell upon the morrow, or slip back to Leicestershire as he had come from it—unnoticed. With the morning, however, he finds his courage has evaporated, and that he cannot leave Norwood without at least looking in her fair face again.

So, after having made a pretence of eating breakfast, the poor old gentleman (all the poorer for being old, and feeling his age at this moment more acutely than any youngster can imagine for him) strolls up to Laburnum Cottage, and enters at the wicket gate.

The lawn is covered with children, playing croquet with their governess and mother, who nods to him as he enters, with an inclination of her head towards the open door.

'Irene is in the school-room,' she says, gaily. But Irene is not in the school-room; she has seen him enter, and comes to meet him in the narrow passage, clad in a soft muslin robe of white and black: the shape and folds and general appearance of which he ever afterwards remembers.

'Colonel Mordaunt,' she says hurriedly, with heightened colour, and trembling, parted lips, 'were you sincere in what you told me yesterday, that you would take

me for your wife, just as I am, without one particle of love in me, except for a shameful memory ?'

'Irene, you know I was !'

'Then, take me !' she answers, as she submits to the arms that are thrown about her, and the lips that are laid upon her own.

* * * *

Women are problems : *cela va sans dire* ; though why the problems should remain insoluble is, perhaps, less due to their intricacy than the muddle heads who strive to fathom them by beginning at the wrong end. I don't know what reason Colonel Mordaunt may assign to this apparently sudden change in Irene St. John's sentiments ; perhaps he attributes it to the effect of deliberation—more likely to the irresistibility of his own pleading ; but any way he is quite satisfied with the result.

Mrs. Cavendish is not in the least surprised, but thinks it the very best thing her niece could do ; and the governess and children become quite excited at the prospect of a wedding. No one is surprised, indeed, after the lapse of half an hour, unless it be Irene herself ; and even she, once reconciled to the idea, tells her own heart that it is fate, and she might have guessed that it would end so, all along.

Perhaps I have even failed in surprising my reader ! Yet there had been an impetus, and a very strong one, given to Irene St. John's will that day.

The impetus came in a letter bearing the post-mark of Berwick, where Mrs. Cavendish's daughter Mary was staying with some friends, and which letter her mother had read aloud for the benefit of the breakfast table.

'We were at such a grand party last week' (so part of Mary's innocent communication ran) 'at Lord Norham's. I wore my blue

silk, with the pearl ornaments you lent me, and they were so much admired. Lord Muiraven (Lord Norham's eldest son) was there, and Mr. Keir. Lord M. danced twice with me, but his brother never even spoke to me, which I thought rather rude. However, he is engaged to be married to a Miss Robertson, such a pretty girl, and had no eyes for any one else. They danced together all the evening. Mr. Keir is considered handsome, but I like Lord Muiraven best.'

'Very complimentary to Mary, I'm sure,' remarked the gratified mother, as she refolded the letter. 'My dear Irene, I wish you would just reach me down the 'Peerage.' What a thing it would be if Lord Muiraven took a fancy to the girl !'

Voilà tout.

Irene St. John having once made up her mind to accept Colonel Mordaunt's offer, puts no obstacle in the way of an early marriage ; on the contrary, she appears almost feverishly anxious that the matter should be settled and done with as soon as possible ; and, as they have none to consult but themselves, and her will is law, the wedding is fixed to take place during the succeeding month. All that she stipulates for is that it shall be perfectly private. She believes she has strength to go through all that is before her, but she would prefer not testing that strength in public ; and her first consideration now is for the feelings of her future husband, that they may never be hurt by some weak betrayal of her own. So all the necessary preparations are expeditiously but quietly made, and when the morning itself arrives (a lovely morning in June, just twelve months after poor Mrs. St.

John held that trying interview with Eric Keir, in Brook Street), there are not above a dozen urchins, two nursery-maids with perambulators, and a stray baker-boy, hanging about the wicket of Laburnum Cottage to see the bride step into her carriage. The paucity of Irene's male relations has made it rather difficult to find any one to stand in the position of a father to her on this occasion; but her uncle, Mr. Campbell, takes that responsibility on himself, and has the honour of sharing her equipage. Mr. Campbell is accompanied to Norwood by his wife and two eldest daughters, who, with Mary and Emily Cavendish, form Irene's modest troupe of bridesmaids; and Miss Mordaunt (to whom her brother, finding all persuasion unavailing, was forced to send a peremptory order to put in an appearance at the wedding) is also present.

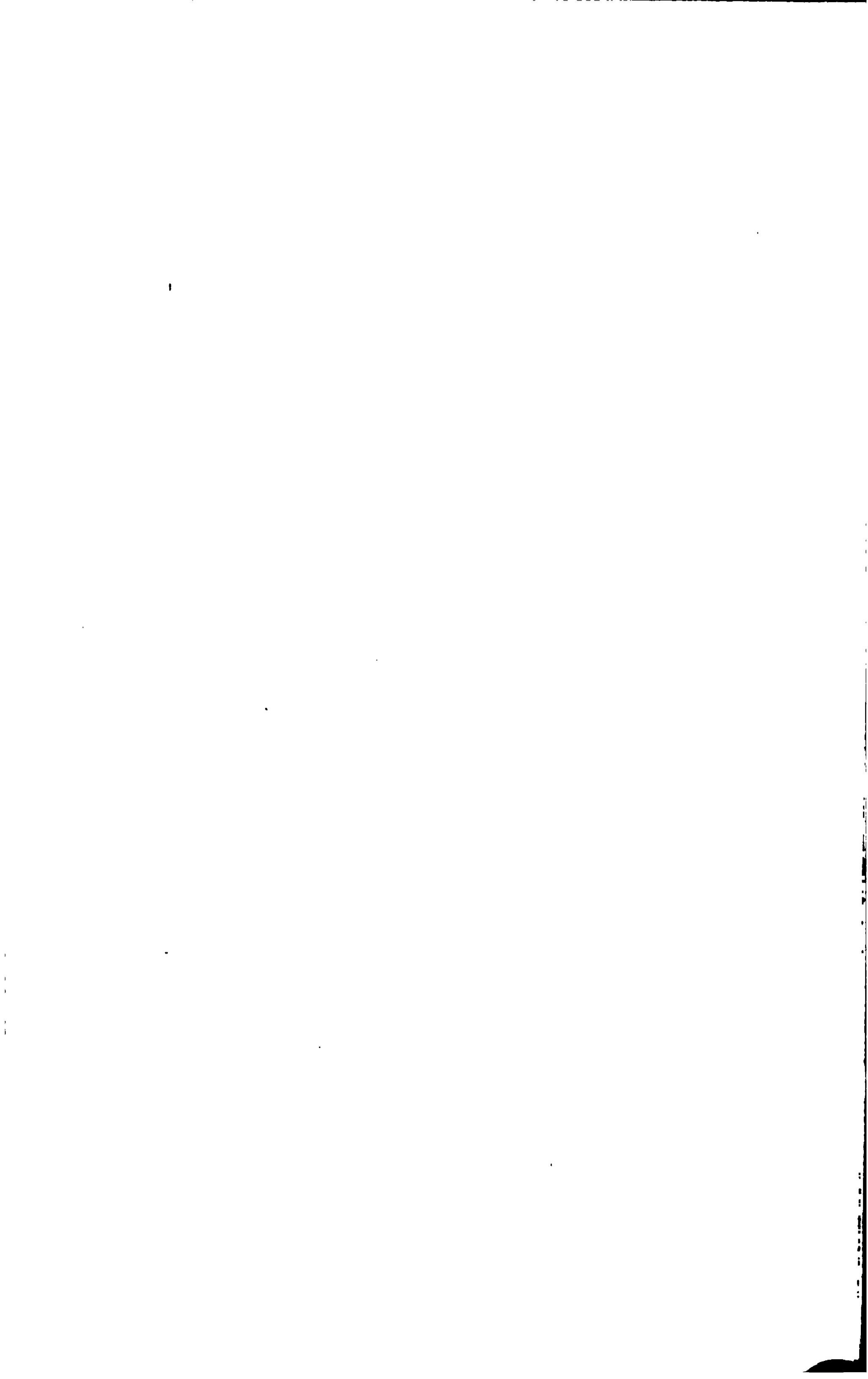
She arrived the day before, and up to the moment of going to church has resisted all Irene's endeavours to make acquaintance with her, by entreaties that she will not trouble herself on her account—that she will take no notice of her—that she will leave her to do as she best can by herself, until the girl inclines to the belief that her new sister-in-law is most antagonistic both to the marriage and herself; and little dreams that Isabella Mordaunt's eyes have opened on a new world at the sight of her beauty, and are ready to shed tears at the slightest demonstration of interest on her part. Yet she is too miserably shy and reserved to show it.

There is little time, however, for Irene to think of that just now, or of anything except the matters in hand, through all of which she conducts herself with great dignity and sweetness.

Colonel Mordaunt naturally

thinks there never was a lovelier or more graceful bride, and most of those who see her think the same; but Irene's outward comportment is the least noble thing about her that day. It cannot but be a day of bitter recollection to her; but she will not show it. She will not mar the value of the gift which she has freely given by letting the receiver see how little worth it is to herself. She goes through the religious ceremony in simple faith that she will be enabled to keep the promises she makes; and then she mixes in the little festivity that follows with as much gaiety as is consistent with the occasion.

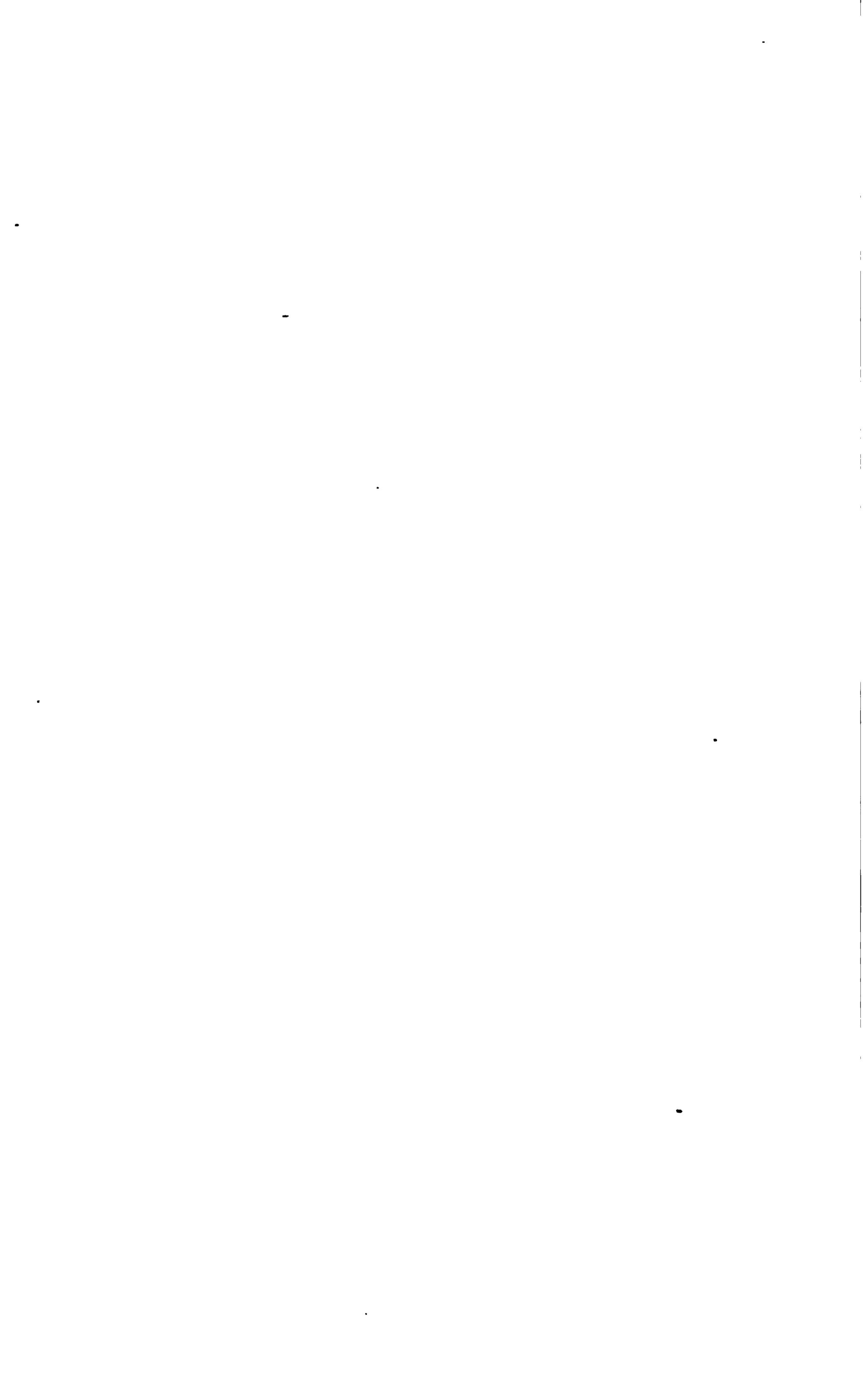
Colonel Mordaunt is enchanted with her every look and word and action; the old man hardly knows whether he is standing on his head or his heels; he is wrapt up in the present, and has quite forgotten all that went before it. Even when he finds himself alone with his young wife in the railway carriage, speeding fast to Weymouth, where they are to spend their honeymoon, the vision is not dispelled. It is true that he throws his arm rather awkwardly about her slender figure, and kisses her for the first time as a husband, with more timidity than he would have shown had he been twenty-five years younger. But Irene's quiet, affectionate manners reassure him. She appears to take such an interest in all that is going on around them, and talks so naturally of what they shall do and see at Weymouth, and of the pleasant autumn they shall spend together at Fen Court, that his passing trepidation lest the girl should after all regret the decision she had made is soon dispelled; and, what is better, the days that follow bring no cloud with them to lessen his tranquillity. For Irene is not a woman to marry



"NO INTENTIONS."

Drawn by Frank Dicksee.]

"I want to put a question to you, Colgent!"



a man and then worry him to the grave by her sentimental grief for another ; she has chosen her present lot, and she intends to make it as happy a lot as lies in her power. She is of too honourable and upright a nature to make a fellow-creature pay the debt of her own misfortune, and especially a fellow-creature who is doing everything in his power to make her happy. And, added to this, she is too wise to call in a doctor and not follow his prescriptions. She has married Colonel Mordaunt as a refuge from herself ; she never denies the truth even to her own heart ; and if she is still to sit down and pine to death for love of Eric Keir, where was the necessity for action which her strong will brought to bear upon her feebler nature. She may break down hereafter ; but Irene Mordaunt commences her march upon the path of married life bravely.

She not only strives to be pleased —she is pleased with all that her husband does for her—with the numerous presents he lays at her feet, the pleasant excursions he devises, the thoughtful care he shows for her comfort. She repays it all with gratitude and affection. Yes—Colonel Mordaunt has done well in confiding his honour and happiness to Irene's keeping !

About the same date, in that same month of June, a jolly, genial-hearted old man, commonly known as the Earl of Norham, is seated in the library of Berwick Castle, in her Majesty's 'loyal and worshipful borough of Berwick. Lord Norham does not carry out in the faintest degree the idea of a lord, as usually depicted by the heated imaginations of the young and the uninitiated. His appearance alone would be sufficient to put to flight all the dreams of

'sweet seventeen,' or the ambitious cravings of a maturer age. He is a tall, stout man, of about five-and-sixty, with a smiling red face, a bushy head of grey hair, and 'mutton-chop' whiskers just one shade darker ; and he is dressed in black and white checked trousers, of decidedly country make : a white waistcoat, with the old-fashioned stock surmounting it ; and a brown holland coat. The windows of the library are all open to the air, and Lord Norham is not warmly attired, yet he seems much oppressed by the weather ; and to see him lay down his pen every two minutes (he is writing letters for the mid-day post), and mop his heated face round and round with a yellow and red silk handkerchief until it shines again, you would be ready to swear he was a jolly, well-to-do farmer, who had every reason to be satisfied with his crops and his dinner-table. In effect, Lord Norham is all you would imagine him to be ; for agriculture is his hobby, and he allows no accidents to disturb his peace. But he is something much better into the bargain—a true nobleman, and the fondest father in the United Kingdom. He lost his wife at a very early stage of their married life, and he has never thought of marrying again, but devoted his life to the children she left behind her. There are only those three, Robert, Lord Muiraven, and his brothers Eric and Cecil ; and when their mother died the eldest was just four years old. Then it was that all the latent worth and nobility of Lord Norham's character came forth. His friends had rated him before at a very ordinary standard, knowing him to be an excellent landlord and an indulgent husband, and crediting him with as much good sense as his position in life required, and a strict belief in the Thirty-nine Articles. But

from that date they saw the man as he really was—from that moment, when he knew himself to be widowed and desolate, and his unfortunate little ones left without a mother at the very time they wanted her most, he took a solemn oath never to place the happiness of *her* children at the mercy of another woman's caprice, but to be to them, as far as in him lay, father and mother both. The man must have had a heart as wide as a woman's to arrive at such a conclusion, and stick to it; for the temptations to change his state again must have been manifold. But as in some mothers' breasts the feelings of maternity, once developed, can never be rivalled by a meaner passion, so, though far more rarely, it occasionally happens with a father; and from that day to this, when we see him mopping his dear old face with his silk handkerchief, Lord Norham has never staggered in his purpose—more, he has never repented it. Lord Muiraven and his brothers do not know what it is to regret their mother. She died so early, that they have no recollection of her; and Lord Norham's care and indulgence have been so close and unremitting, that the knowledge that other young men have mothers who love them, and are their best friends, has no power to do more than make them think what a glorious old fellow their father must be, never to have let them feel the want of theirs. Indeed, love for their father is a religion with these young men, who even go the length of being jealous of each other in vying for his affection in return. And with Lord Norham, *the boys* are everything. His earldom might be wrested from him, Berwick Castle burnt to the ground, his money sunk in a West End theatre, the '*Saturday Review*' might even

stoop to take an interest in his proceedings—yet give him his '*boys*,' and he would be happy. For their sakes, he sows and reaps and threshes out the corn, has horse-boxes added to his stables, and a racquet-court built upon his grounds; the bedrooms heated by hot-air pipes, and the drawing-room turned into a smoking divan. They are his one thought and interest and pleasure—the theme that is for ever on his tongue, with which he wearies everybody but himself. He lives upon '*the boys*,' and sleeps upon '*the boys*,' and eats and drinks '*the boys*'; and when he dies, those cabalistic words, '*the boys*,' will be found engraven on his honest, loving heart.

He has just raised his handkerchief to wipe his face for about the twentieth time, when the door is thrown open, and a '*boy*' enters. There is no need for Lord Norham to turn round. He knows the step—trust him for that—and the beam that illuminates his countenance makes it look redder and shinier than before.

'Well, my dear boy!' he commences, before the prodigy can reach his side.

'Have you seen this, dad?' replies Cecil, as he places the '*Times*' advertisement sheet upon the table.

He is a fine young fellow, just one year younger than Eric, and, as his father puts on his glasses to read the paragraph to which he points, he stands by his side and throws his arm right round the old man's neck in the most charming and natural manner possible.

'Where, my dear boy, where?' demands Lord Norham, running his eyes up and down the page.

'There, dad—the top marriage. "At St. John's Church, Norwood, Philip Mordaunt, Esq., of Fen Court, Leicestershire, Lieut.-Colo-

nel in H.M. Regt. 155th Royal Greens, to Irene, only child of the late Thomas St. John, Esq., of Brook Street, W." Don't you know who that is? Eric's spoon, that he was so hot after last season. He'll be awfully cut up when he reads this, I know.'

'Eric's spoon, dear boy!' exclaims Lord Norham, who is quite at a loss to understand the mysterious allusion.

'Yes! — the woman he was spooney on, I mean. Why, every one thought it was a settled thing, for he was always at the house. But I suppose she wouldn't have him—which quite accounts for the poor fellow's dumps all last autumn. Eric was awfully slow last autumn, you know, father—he didn't seem to care for hunting or shooting, or doing anything in company. I said at the time I was sure the girl had jilted him; and so she has, plain enough!'

'My dear boy, this is a perfect revelation to me!' exclaims Lord Norham, pushing his glasses on to his forehead, and wheeling round his chair to confront his son. 'Eric in love! I had not the least idea of it.'

'Hadn't you? He was close enough with us, of course; but I made sure he would have told you. Oh, these things must happen, you know, dad; there's no help for them.'

'And this girl—this Miss St. John, or whoever she is—refused your brother, you say?'

'No, I didn't say that, father. I know nothing for certain—it was only supposition on my part; but, putting this and that together, it looks like it—doesn't it, now?'

Cecil is smiling with the carelessness of youth to pain; but Lord Norham is looking grave—his heart wretched at the idea of one of his cherished 'boys' having been so slighted. It is true that

he has heard nothing of this little episode in Eric's life; for when he goes up to town, a very rare occurrence, he seldom stays for more than a few weeks at a time, and never mixes in any lighter dissipation than an evening in the House to hear some of his old friends speak (Lord Norham was for many years a member of Parliament himself), or a heavy political dinner where no ladies are admitted.

It is all news to him, and very unpleasant news. It enables him to account for several things in Eric's behaviour which have puzzled him before; but it shocks him to think that his boy should have been suffering, and suffering alone—shocks him almost as much as though he had been his mother instead of his father—and all his thoughts go out immediately to the best means of conveying him comfort.

'Cecil, my dear!' (the old man constantly makes strangers smile to hear him address these stalwart young men, with beards upon their chins, as though they were still children) 'don't say anything about this to your brother, will you? He will hear it fast enough: ill news travels apace.'

'Oh! he's seen it, father: at least, I expect he's seen it, for he was studying the paper for an hour before I got it. I only took it up when he laid it down.'

'And where is he now?' demands Lord Norham, quickly. It would be exaggeration perhaps to assert that he has immediate visions of his beloved Eric sticking head downwards in the muddiest part of the lake, but had his imagination thus run riot, he could scarcely have asked the question with more anxiety.

'In his room, I think; I haven't seen him since. By-the-way, dad,

I shall run up to town again to-morrow. Eric says he has had enough of it; but Muiraven and I have engagements three weeks deep. You can't be up again this season, I suppose?"

'I don't think so, dear boy, unless it should be for a week before the House breaks up. And so Eric is not going back again, though it must be very dull for him here, I am afraid.'

'Precious slow, isn't it, now the Robertsons are gone?'

'You'll stay with them, I suppose, Cecil?'

'Well, I don't think so. They've asked me, but I'd rather put up with Bob. It's all very well being engaged, you know, father, when you are sitting on a sofa together in a room by yourselves; but it takes all the gilt off the gingerbread for me to be trotted out before a few friends as Harriet's "young man." Bliss is only procurable in solitude or a crowd. Besides, a nine o'clock breakfast and no latch-key, doesn't agree with my notions of the season.'

'It ought to agree with your notions of being engaged, you young rip!' says his father, laughing.

'No, it doesn't! No woman shall ever keep me in leading strings, married or single. I mean to have my liberty all my life. And if Harriet doesn't like it, why, she may lump it, or take up with some one else: that's what I tell her!'

'The principles of the nineteenth century!' cries Lord Norham. 'Well! I think she'd be a fool to change you, Cecil, whatever conditions you may choose to make.'

'Of course you think so, dad. However, if my lady wants to keep me in town this weather, she'll have to make herself very agreeable. Perfect sin to leave

this place for bricks and mortar, isn't it?'

'It seems a pity; just as the hay is coming on, too. I shall persuade Eric to ride over to the moors with me, and see what the grouse prospects are looking like this year.'

'Yes! do father. That'll stir up the poor old boy. Hallo! there's Muiraven beckoning to me across the lawn. We're going to blood the bay filly. She's been looking very queer the last few days. Hope it's not glanders. All right!' with a shout; 'I'll come!' and leaping through the open window, Lord Norham's youngest hope joins his brother, whilst the old man gazes after his sons until they disappear, with eyes overbrimming with proud affection.

Then he rises and goes in search of his stricken Eric, with much the same sort of feeling with which a woman rushes to the side of a beloved daughter as soon as she hears she is in trouble.

Eric is in his bedroom—a large handsome apartment, facing the park—and he is sitting at the toilet-table without any apparent design, gazing at the thick foliage below, and the fallow deer that are clustered on the grass beneath it.

He jumps up as soon as his father enters, however, and begins to whistle loudly, and to run his fingers through his hair before the glass, as though his sole object in going there had been to beautify himself.

'Well, dad!' he says, cheerfully.

'Well, my dear boy!' replies Lord Norham, with a vain attempt to conceal his anxiety; 'what are you going to do with yourself this fine morning?'

'I'm sure I don't know. Ride, I suppose, or read, or yawn the

time away. Where are the others?"

'Gone to the stables to physic the bay filly. Have you seen the papers, Eric?"

A slight change passes over his countenance—just a quiver of the muscles, nothing more: but the father's eye detects it.

'Yes, thanks!—oh, yes! I've seen them! No news, as usual. There never is any news now-a-days.'

'Have you seen the "Times," my dear boy?"

'Yes.'

'What! the advertisement sheet—the marriages?"

'Yes! why do you ask me?"

'Because I thought—I imagined—there was an announcement there that would interest you—that would be news: in fact, bad news.'

'Who said so?' demands Eric Keir, turning round to confront his father. He is very pale, and there is a hard look about the lines of his face which was not there yesterday; otherwise, he seems himself and quite collected.'

But Lord Norham will not betray Cecil: he never sets one child against the other by letting him suppose that his brothers speak of him behind his back: that is one reason why the young men are mutually so fond of one another and of him.

'I imagined so, my dear boy, that's all. Your little *penchant* of last season was no secret, you know, and reading what I do to-day, I naturally thought——'

'You are speaking of Miss St. John's marriage, father, I suppose. But why should that cut me up? We were very good friends before her mother died, and all that sort of thing, but——'

'But nothing more! You didn't care for her, Eric?"

'My dear old dad, you are not

going to advocate my caring for another man's wife, are you? Of course I liked her—every one liked her: she was awfully pretty and jolly, and *distingué* looking; and if she's only half as nice as Mrs. Mordaunt as she was as Miss St. John, I shall say that—that—Mordaunt, whoever he may be, is a very lucky fellow.' And here Eric whistles more ferociously than before.

'It is such a relief to hear you speak in this strain about it, my dear boy,' replies Lord Norham, who has seated himself in an arm-chair by the open window; 'do you know, Eric, from the rumours that have reached me, I was almost afraid—almost afraid you know, my dear, that you might have been led on to propose in that quarter. You didn't propose to her, did you, Eric?"

'No, dad! I didn't propose to her!' replies the young man, stoutly.

'Then why did you break off the intimacy so suddenly? You used to be very intimate indeed with the St. Johns last season.'

'What a jolly old inquisitor you would have made, father, and how you would have enjoyed putting the thumb-screw on a fellow. Why did I break off the intimacy so suddenly?—well, I didn't break it off. Mrs. St. John thought I was there too often, and told me so, and I sheered off in consequence. Afterwards they went abroad, and the poor old lady died, and I have not seen the young one since. That's the whole truth.'

'And you didn't like the girl well enough to marry her, then?"

A cloud, palpable to the dullest eye, obscures for a moment all the forced gaiety of his expression.

'My dear father! I don't want to marry any one.'

'That is what puzzles me,

Eric. Why shouldn't you want it ?'

'There's a lot of time, isn't there? You don't expect a fellow to tie himself down for life at five-and-twenty?'

'No: but it is unnatural for a young man to avoid female society as you do. It can't be because you dislike it, my dear boy.'

'I have no particular taste for it.'

'But why? they don't snub you, do they? I should think you could do pretty much as you liked, with the women, eh, Eric?' with a glance of pride that speaks volumes.

'I never try, dad. I am very happy as I am.'

'My dear boy! that is what convinces me that there is something more the matter than you choose to confess. If everything was right, you wouldn't be happy as you are. Look at your brothers! Here's Cecil engaged already.'

'Poor devil!' interpolates Eric.

'And Muiraven doing his best to be so; although I don't think he's quite such a favourite with the girls as his brother. I'm sure I don't know why, or what they can possibly want more, for you would scarcely meet a finer young man from here to John O'Groats than Muiraven is.'

Eric, recalling Muiraven's thick-set figure, round, rosy face (he takes after the earl), and reddish hair, cannot forbear smiling.

'He's an out-and-out good fellow, dad, but he's no beauty.'

'He's a different style to yourself, I allow; but he's a very good-looking young man. However, that doesn't alter circumstances. If he doesn't marry, it is all the more incumbent on you to think of doing so.'

'I shall never marry, father,' says Eric, uneasily; 'you must

put that idea out of your head at once.'

'There, again, that's unnatural, and there must be a reason for it. You are graver, too, than your years, Eric, and you often have fits of despondency; and I have thought, my dear (you'll forgive your old father for mentioning it), that you must have encountered some little disappointment early in life, say in your college days, which has had a great effect upon your character. Am I right?'

'How closely you must have watched me,' replies the son, evasively.

'Whom have I in the world to interest me except you and your brothers? You are part of myself, my dear boy. Your pleasures are my pleasures, and your griefs become my griefs. I have passed many a restless night thinking of you, Eric!'

'Dear old dad!' says Eric, laying his hand on his father's shoulder, and looking him affectionately in the face, 'I am not worth so much trouble on your part—indeed I am not.'

'Oh! now I feel inclined to quarrel with you,' says Lord Norham; 'the idea of your talking such nonsense! Why, child, if it were for no other reason, it would be for this, that every time you look at me as you did just now, your sweet mother seems to rise from her grave and gaze at me through your eyes. Ah! my poor Grace! if she had lived, her boys would have had some one to whom they felt they could open their hearts, instead of closing them up and bearing their troubles by themselves.'

'Father, don't say that!' exclaims Eric, earnestly. 'If I had had twenty mothers, I couldn't have confided in them more than I do in you, nor loved them more. But you are too good for me, and

expect too great things of me, and I shall end by being a disappointment, after all. That is my fear.'

'I can never be disappointed whilst you and your brothers are happy; but how can I remedy an evil of which I must not hear?'

'You will harp on that idea of my having come to grief,' says Eric, testily.

'Because I believe it to be true. I would never try to force your confidence, dear boy; but it would be a great comfort to know you had no secrets from me.'

The young man has a struggle with himself, flushes, and then runs on hurriedly:

'Well, then, if it will give you any pleasure, I will tell you. I have had a trouble of the kind you mention, and I find it hard to throw it off, and I should very much like to leave England again for a short time. Perhaps, after all, it is better you should know the truth, father, and then you will be able to account for the restlessness of my disposition.'

'My poor boy!' says Lord Norham, abstractedly. But Eric doesn't care about being pitied.

'What about the travelling, dad? Charley Holmes is going in for his county next election, and wants me to run over to America with him for a spell first. It's nothing of a journey now-a-days, and I could come back whenever you wanted me. Shall I say I'll go?'

'Go, my dear? Yes, of course, if it'll give you any pleasure; only take care of yourself, and come back cured.'

'No fear of that,' he replies, laughing; 'in fact, it's half done already. We can't go through life without any scratches, father.'

'No, my boy, no! and they're necessary, too—they're necessary. Make what arrangements you like about America, Eric; fix your own time and your own destination, only make up your mind to enjoy yourself, and to come back cured, my boy—to come back cured.'

Lord Norham is about to leave the room as he chuckles over the last words, but suddenly he turns and comes back again.

'I have suffered, my dear,' he says, gently; 'I know what it is.'

The young man grasps the hand extended; squeezes it as though it were in a vice, and walks away to the open window.

His father pats him softly on the back, passes his hand once fondly over his hair, and leaves him to himself. And this is the parent from whom he has concealed the darkest secret of his life!

'Oh, if I could but tell him!' groans Eric; 'if I only could make up my mind to tell him, how much happier I should be. Irene! Irene! you have doubled the gulf between us!'

He does not weep; he has grown too old for tears: but he stands at the window, suffering the tortures of hell, until the loud clanging of the luncheon-bell draws him back unwillingly into the world again.

* * *

(To be continued.)



THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

WIDOWERS AND SISTERS-IN-LAW—MIXED MARRIAGES—HOW THE RICH SPEND THEIR MONEY—LEGALIZED APPETITES—COMPULSORINESS—SUNDAYS AND THE MUSEUMS—LIBELLOUS CRITICISMS—‘REVEALED AT LAST’—COLONEL ANSON AND MR. CARDWELL.

WHOMO are the people that are perpetually wanting to marry their deceased wife's sister? Why on earth are their amatory propensities to become the positive nuisance of every session of Parliament? Good gracious me! Have they not got the whole wide world to choose from, that they must limit their choice to the same small circle as before? Well, these uxorious persons have got their Bill through the House of Commons again; and I suppose they are quite prepared to see it thrown out in the Lords, as per usual. But they will triumph, these sentimental people; I am sure they will. Never were lovers so determinedly persevering; and before long we shall all be able to congratulate ourselves that the law permits us to look forward to the possibility of our marrying Sarah Jane, whom just now we consider as an unmitigated nuisance, because she *will* come and stay with us so often. But where is this sort of legislation to stop? That is what we are all talking about. Why on earth should not a widow marry a deceased husband's brother? Why should not a step-mother marry a step-son? Or why—oh, horror of horrors!—should not a man marry his mother-in-law? There is no argument against such unions which may not be urged with equal force against the deceased wife's sister. Of course it may be urged that no sane person would like to marry his mother-in-law. We can only reply that this is an extremely eccentric age, and we can never

tell what may happen from one day to another; and really it is not at all impossible in these days of mutual improvement that a ‘Society for the admiration of one's wife's family’ may be started with considerable success.

One thing is perfectly plain. Should the Bill which has now passed the House of Commons become law, all our traditional notions upon the subject of marriage will be severely shaken. The ancient theory of the sacred and quasi-sacramental nature of the bond will be shattered for evermore in England; for it is that theory, and that alone, which is the unanswerable argument against marriage with a sister-in-law. If husband and wife become so truly one by reason of the holy and mysterious union into which they have entered, so that the brother of the husband becomes as really the brother of the wife that any subsequent marriage between these two must be incestuous, then no plausibility, no plea of expediency, can justify the legalizing of such forbidden nuptials; if, however, this is all a mistake, and marriage is nothing more or less than a contract between two persons of opposite sexes to live together, which can in no way affect the relationship of the contracting parties, then the present state of the law is manifestly absurd and unreasonable; and there is only this to be said in its favour—that it is in accordance with the traditions of Christianity. But to the supporters of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill I should like to put

just one question; and it is this: On what possible ground do you object to polygamy? I really do not see why I should not have two wives, if my income is co-extensive with my wishes. You have sedulously endeavoured to deprive me of all my higher notions of any sanctity attaching to the matrimonial state, and the result is that I desire to marry my sister-in-law while my wife is still alive; possibly you know the feeling, and therefore will acquit me of expressing any unreasonable or outrageous desire. A reply, at your convenience, will oblige.

This reminds me of mixed marriages; and, at the risk of seeming impertinent, I must refer for one moment to a marriage between a Christian gentleman and a Jewish lady which not long since so sorely exercised the pious minds of some well-intentioned people belonging to the former persuasion. Certain religious difficulties were urged against the nuptials, and for a week or so the matter was discussed at five o'clock tea, with more or less warmth, according to the partisans present. 'Pooh-pooh,' said a certain eminent C.B. on one of these occasions; 'why in the world make such a fuss about it? After all, they will only be bound together like the Old and New Testament!'

However, the moral of it all is that the world is beginning to take very much broader views on the subject of religious differences; and we may express a hope that the race of fanatics is disappearing fast. I am aware that some persons draw from this fact the conclusion that definite religious belief is fading away, and losing its hold upon the minds of men. May we not venture to

think, with equal justice, that we have discovered that, however dear our faith may be to ourselves, we cannot force it down the throats of our friends who happen to take opposite views; and, however it may be with the aged bishop in the Vatican, we ourselves are by no means infallible?

Just at the time when every article of ordinary use and consumption became extremely dear, and the world was only waiting for the frost and snow to send up coals to prohibitive prices, Mr. Goldwin Smith thought it right to make animadversions upon 'how the rich spend their money,' and the topic was discussed in a highly interesting and amusing manner by certain correspondents of the 'Pall Mall Gazette.' Those who are familiarly acquainted with the 'Pall Mall' do not require to be told that it is the one daily journal remarkable for the sound common-sense which it exhibits in dealing with imperial and social subjects; and a well-known correspondent who signs himself 'W. R. G.' controv-verted in a most able manner the position of the quondam Oxford professor. Into the details of the discussion that ensued, or into the depths of Mr. Ruskin's characteristically illogical contribution to the controversy, I do not propose to enter. It is sufficient to say that Mr. Goldwin Smith urged that the possessor of an income of thirty thousand a year consumed what would support six hundred families: and 'W. R. G.' sensibly argued the point. The 'Saturday Review'—from whose ambitious finger no man's pie is freed—devoted one of its special-pleading articles to a considera-tion of 'W. R. G.'s argument, but unfortunately founded its entire

reasoning upon a misconception of one word used by 'W. R. G.'; and its effect was, consequently, dissipated by half a dozen lines of rejoinder. 'W. R. G.' maintained that the possessor of thirty thousand a year, though it might be said that he spent his money on himself, could not fail to distribute his income among a very considerable number of persons; and, whatever might be his tastes, he was a large employer of labour; and therefore his selfishness, to put it in the strongest form, could not fail to be profitable to the community. Now the question that one not unnaturally asks is, what does Mr. Goldwin Smith wish the owner of a vast income to do with his money? Surely he is not prepared to say that, after providing for the moderate wants of his family and the education of his children, he ought to give the surplus away in what is termed charity! This would be to pauperize his neighbourhood of poorer persons, and, in fact, to give him a large amount of retainers, who would soon come to occupy the position of serfs in feudal times. Or is he to abandon the enjoyment of all those various pleasurable feelings which are known by the vague name of luxury, and disperse his wealth in reclaiming waste lands, in building cottages for peasants, and making roads? If his money is so spent, it cannot be denied that the lavish expenditure would be extremely agreeable to many impudent persons, and would go far towards silencing complaints about local taxation. It would, in fact, throw the burdens and responsibilities of many upon one, and would so make the capitalist a petty monarch, and go far to demoralize the persons whom his riches relieved of pressing burdens. But, supposing that two-

thirds of the income were spent upon agriculture, we may fairly suppose that in the economical order of things there would still be a considerable return upon the outlay—for it is obvious that the richest of men could not employ his money at perpetual loss—we are still met by the question, what is to be done with the profits, if they are not to be put away idly in a strong box? If they are to be of use to the community at large, and to be constantly distributed, it is plain that the possessor must, in one shape or another, expend them upon 'luxuries.' And it is certainly extremely difficult to urge that he has no right to do so. Look at the matter as you will, you cannot deny that a very large proportion of the population are engaged upon the production and manufacture of those articles which go to make up 'luxury'; and if we are never to sit in arm-chairs, use silver plate, or hang silk curtains in our drawing-rooms, decorate our houses, or build mansions to live in, what is to become of the countless numbers of workmen who have hitherto been employed in these various branches of trade? I have heard pious Evangelicals seriously maintain that it is wicked to spend ten or twenty thousand pounds upon building a church, when a tenth of the sum might have provided a decent meeting-house, and the rest might have been given to the poor! They forget, or do not consider, that the church costing twenty thousand pounds merely means twenty thousand pounds distributed in honest labour, which, it need scarcely be said, is infinitely more desirable to be done than that a hundredth part should be given away to support poor people in idleness, which generally means drink.

The fact is, all these supposed difficulties arise from the fact that certain well-meaning folk will try to make society what it ought to be, according to their ideas, instead of dealing with the conditions of human existence as they are, and endeavouring to make the best of them. If you cannot make people moral by Act of Parliament, you certainly cannot govern the world by the mere promotion of philosophical philanthropy. Denounce the 'luxurious' classes from your ideal standpoint if you please, but the fact remains that it is not against them that you can charge crime and the moral degradation of the species. It may be said, with a certain degree of truth, that it is the desire for luxury of some sort or another that impels to crime; but it may be retorted, with far greater truth, that criminal acts usually spring from a determination to acquire some degree of wealth and independence by speedy and illegitimate channels. Take such instances as the careers of men like Robson and Redpath. Had they been content to work on in their several stations, they might by this time have been enjoying in complete security a comfortable competence earned by assiduity and honest work, which they endeavoured to snatch by dissimulation and forgery. Some few sensational examples we may have of inherited fortunes dissipated at the gambling-table and on the race-course; but these are warnings—the exceptions that prove the rule. Let Mr. Goldwin Smith say what he will, the overwhelming majority of the wealthy gentlemen in England make good use of their money; and it must never be forgotten that the possession of great riches entails its own anxieties and responsibilities.

It is rumoured that Government has got in a pigeon-hole a further scheme for revising the Licensing Acts. This they will probably leave for their successors, as, though they all approve of it, they shrink from introducing it, and think that they can deal with it better in Opposition. I think it better not to state the name of the minister who has it in his special keeping. The philosophical Radicals, aided by a certain well-known baronet, are undoubtedly at the bottom of it; but, having been favoured with a glimpse at it while calling upon an extremely Civil Servant at his office, I do not conceive that I am violating any confidence in stating what I remember of it. In the first place, all houses of public refreshment are to be closed at half-past ten P.M., not merely in order to prevent drinking; but the Government are deeply impressed with the statement of several eminent physicians, that the majority of mankind not only drink too much, but eat too much; and a class of disease vulgarly known as nightmare, but scientifically called dyspepsia, has been proved, by incontrovertible statistics, to be alarmingly upon the increase; and it is believed that the time has come when a legislative restriction must be put upon the late consumption of grilled bones, devilled kidneys, and hot potatoes. We have been warned in an intelligent, popular, and high-class drama, entitled 'The Goose with the Golden Eggs,' that eating leads to drinking, and therefore it is obvious that it is of small use dealing with the latter, unless we are prepared to take strong measures with reference to the former. It is said that an old and highly respectable establishment called 'Evans's,' in Covent Garden, was the chief considera-

tion which prompted the promoters of the Bill in drawing out their measure; and certain dramatic authors have felt keenly that the criticisms written at the Albion Tavern, near Drury Lane Theatre, are unquestionably the results of bile and dyspeptic hypochondria. All things considered, we are not disposed to wonder at the present proposal, nor, as good citizens, ought we to grumble at the disinterested anxiety which takes such care of our stomachs. Nobody can deny that the interference is quite legitimate. One form of insobriety is quite as bad as another; and the glutton, in his way, is just as bad as the drunkard. The man who drinks too much is for a brief period a pest to society; he is noisy, quarrelsome, and generally offensive; but the man 'whose god is his belly' does far more real mischief; the crimes that proceed from disordered digestive functions are almost incalculable. The effects of a Mansion House dinner, for example, may descend to posterity. An overloaded stomach may prompt the most ridiculous jealousy, or it may incite to the making of a will the provisions of which may be abominably unjust. And indigestion more frequently, perhaps, than intoxication induces otherwise reasonable beings to commit the fatal act of self-destruction. Add to this the fact that love of eating compels its votary to many economic errors, and induces a vast amount of waste in his kitchen, which is intolerable in days like these, when the price of provisions has reached an unprecedented height. Such authorities as Mr. Goldwin Smith, Mr. J. S. Mill, and Mr. John Ruskin are, no doubt, prepared with statistics to show that the 'gourmand' consumes at a single meal enough to provide nineteen

families with food for eight-and-forty hours. Such being the case, we really cannot be surprised that the matter is to be taken up by the Government, and that a Bill is to be introduced into Parliament, sooner or later, limiting the hours at which the hungry public may partake of refreshment. It is whispered—and I must own that the report seems probable enough—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is anxious to compel householders to take out a licence for every dozen of wine stored in the cellar; and to frame a tariff for the amount of meat to be consumed by the members of every household, and to charge a tax upon every pound eaten beyond the statutable allowance. Objections will, of course, be raised to this apparently inquisitorial course; but, after all, it is not more inquisitorial than the income-tax; and, besides, Mr. Lowe is so clever! **FREE LANCE** must own that he does not contemplate these promised proceedings with anything approaching to absolute indifference; and in his resistance thereto he counts upon the support of the licensed victuallers and the '*Morning Advertiser*' Dear Mr. Bruce, we poor men here have been robbed quite sufficiently of our beer; pray do not interfere with our beef, unless it be by way of hanging, drawing, and quartering our butchers who charge us such enormous prices for our chops and steaks.

There is a good deal of 'compulsoriness' abroad now-a-days; we are compelled to be educated, and we are compelled to take certain sanitary measures in building our houses and looking after our drains; by-and-by; if the rage for imitating German military principles goes on, we shall probably be compelled to be soldiers. If

however, our freedom is to be lopped off at one end, there seems some probability that we may gain a little at the other. There is a very strong and decided movement astir which has for its object the abolition of various prejudices and enactments which were introduced, amongst others, by those extremely estimable, but very narrow-minded persons, the Puritans. In short, many of us are beginning to doubt whether the strict and statutable observance of Sunday which has obtained for a considerable period ought not to be modified. Those who have contemplated the matter thoughtfully, and in a reasonable and liberal spirit, have at last arrived at the conclusion that innocent recreation on the first day of the week may be secured by opening the British, South Kensington, and Bethnal Green museums, and other kindred institutions, upon Sunday. Into all the arguments, *pro* and *con*, I have not the inclination, if I had the space, to enter; but there are one or two remarks which I venture to make. In the first place, nineteen centuries of Christianity are a sufficient answer to any illustration borrowed from Judaic observance. The Christian Church deliberately set aside the fourth commandment as far as the seventh day was concerned. It has always expressed its desire that the substitute, Sunday, the weekly memorial of the Resurrection of its Founder, should be regarded differently from other days, in that it prohibited all servile labour, as far as possible, and required its adherents, on that day particularly, to attend Divine Worship at one hour or another, and religious duties were made a matter of obligation upon all the faithful. But existing Puritanical notions are of modern

origin, and find no authority in antiquity; least of all can we find that harmless recreation was ever considered to be on that day an unpardonable sin. If it is urged that the opening of museums, &c., on Sunday, would entail a vast amount of work on certain officials, and that such persons would be prevented from enjoying a day of rest, and be deprived of the advantage of going to church or chapel, the reply is that a very small increase of the official staff would secure a rest of, at all events, one day in seven to each individual, and that a little self-denial on the part of the clergy and ministers of all denominations is all that is required to provide opportunities of attending the Offices and preachments at earlier and later hours. Besides, the necessity of a certain amount of Sunday labour is already admitted by the existence of Sunday traffic in every shape; and this is nothing more than to show that a few must always suffer for the many. We may, also, properly ask the question, whether, as a matter of fact, the way in which Sunday is spent by the mechanics and artisans of our large towns is at present a matter of complete congratulation? We may go further, and ask whether it is just and right to deny to them on the one day which they have entirely to themselves the chance of a certain amount of mental refinement which they may get by wandering amidst works of art which cultivate the perceptions, enrich the fancy, and elevate the ideas? It is no use to talk to people about matters which you wish to get into their heads; you must illustrate your meaning practically. A preacher may discourse eloquently to a rustic congregation about the death of the Redeemer, but a picture of the

Crucifixion will appeal to their understandings with far greater power. Those very much abused people the Ritualists thoroughly understand this, and, having discovered that the ordinary Anglican congregation is remarkably dull and unenthusiastic, they have endeavoured to move church-people by an appeal to the eye as well as to the auricular powers of comprehension. The popular lecturer, who wishes to impress his facts upon his audience, illustrates his argument by diagrams, or painted representations, or practical experiments. And so, if you wish the working classes to have a real chance of improving themselves by examining works of art and the results of genius and labour, don't tell them to go to the South Kensington Museum after their day's work is done, and they are wearied in mind and body; but let them have a real relaxation of their faculties—and all healthy amusement is such a relaxation—by affording them the opportunities of seeing suggestive curiosities, and art treasures, at the time when they can really enjoy them, and derive from the inspection profit and wholesome recreation. And it is not improbable that, when this is done, we shall not find that the working man's Sunday is less profitably employed than heretofore.

The results attending Mr. Charles Reade's action for libel against the '*Morning Advertiser*' are eminently suggestive of a few further remarks on the subject of dramatic criticism, with which *FREE LANCE* has occasionally found it his duty to deal. Mr. Reade dramatized a novel entitled '*Ralph the Heir*,' by Mr. A. Trollope, and called the drama '*Shilly Shally*.' It was performed in due course at the Gaiety Theatre, and,

for reasons which nobody could understand at the time, it was howled against by a chorus of critics in the daily press. One highly virtuous writer, in the discharge of his duty, thought it necessary to stigmatize the production as indecent; and thereupon the author, not unnaturally, was extremely indignant, and brought an action against the proprietors of the journal in which were published the obnoxious remarks. The jury eventually returned a verdict for the plaintiff, and the '*Morning Advertiser*' had to pay 200*l.* damages. The evidence adduced threw a very considerable light upon the way in which dramatic criticism is managed; and I am sorry to say that the conclusions drawn by an impartial public are by no means favourable to the perspicuity of able editors. It appeared at the trial that the writer of the review complained of was himself a dramatic author, but, somehow or other, was an unsuccessful one; in fact, his one play, which was given in time to the public, had been refused at the very theatre where Mr. Reade's drama was welcomed; and the public can hardly be thought to exceed the bounds of charity if they put these two facts together, and conclude that the yellow demon of jealousy threw a bilious hue around the disagreeable criticism. The name of another hostile critic was mentioned, and he, too, appeared to be a rival playwright, and his observations were scarcely less pleasant than those of the '*Advertiser's*' reporter. The elucidation of these facts is by no means satisfactory to the newspaper-reading and play-going public. Our faith in such critics has received a shock, and we are not likely to feel reassured so long as we know that unsuccessful authors

are permitted to chronicle the efforts of their happier, and possibly cleverer, brethren. Some of us have often innocently wondered how it is that these gentlemen who know so much about the drama, and are able with such facility to point out errors of construction, and are so jocose over feebleness of dialogue, have not long ago taken the matter into their own hands, and supplied the stage with something which may be really worth going to see. But such astonishment as we may have indulged in is dissipated now. We have discovered that these acute censors are totally unable to practise what they preach; that they have made their experiments, and been blessed with no substantial result; and, in short, are incapable of doing that which the individuals they write against have proved themselves able to perform. But what an uncomfortable state of mind the reflective portions of the reading public are thrown into! They can only feel that henceforth they can put no reliance whatever upon the inaccurate and highly-coloured theatrical reports which they have hitherto perused with a certain amount of interest. If the criticized play is roundly condemned we shall believe that we are reading the account of a prejudiced and jealous mind; if, on the other hand, the play is unreservedly praised, we shall not be without the horrid suspicion that possibly the author wrote the criticism himself! That the result of Mr. Reade's action will be a warning for the future I am afraid I cannot believe. It is certainly much to be desired that these airy critics should have a deeper sense of their responsibility before they rattle off what I suppose they call their impressions; but it is much to be feared

that their maxim is, that outside their coterie nobody shall triumph where they have failed—if they can prevent it. The public, however, are not unaware that nothing is easier to write than abuse, and nothing more utterly contemptible when it bears the mark of malice.

Those persons who are fond of a story which, when they have read the first two pages, they cannot put down till they have read it right through to the concluding line, will do well to get Mr. A. Eubule-Evans's novelette, 'Revealed at Last.' It is an unpretending, easily-written, and undeniably interesting tale; and though we are unable to say that the incidents are startlingly new, we are compelled to admit that they are ingeniously used and so constructed that they rivet our attention. The author, also, is highly considerate to his readers, and does not stop the action of his story with any meddlesome under-plot, nor does he weary us with pages of platitude and commonplace reflections, which is the crying sin of some of our modern novelists. Some persons may complain that the private lunatic asylum business has been worked to death in recent tales of fiction; but the author, if he had any strong motive for re-introducing the situation, may be pardoned if he urges that, when we consider the appalling amount of persons incarcerated for alleged unsoundness of mind whom the commissioners have to examine every day, we ought not to be surprised if we are told that it is quite within the limits of possibility that the private asylums are sometimes prostituted to the basest of purposes, and that the incidents originally treated of in 'Valentine Vox,' subsequently in 'Hard Cash,'

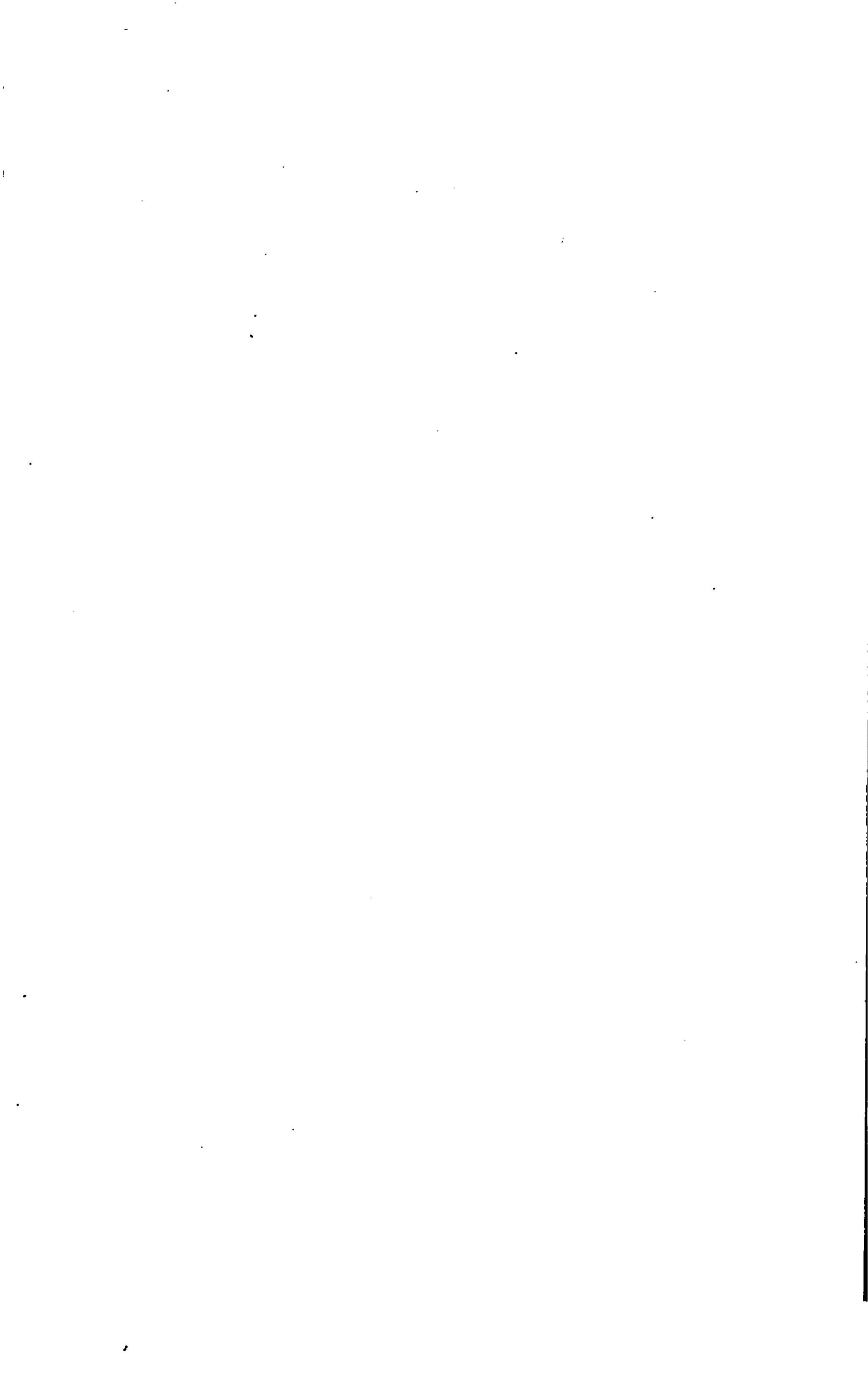
and now in 'Revealed at Last,' have a sad foundation in disgraceful facts. I trust, however, the author will forgive me if I venture to remark that the guests assembled round an earl's dinner-table would not be perpetually addressing their host as 'My lord;' such phraseology they would be quite safe in leaving to the butler.

In these days of Woolwich Infants, Bismarcks, and Affghan Boundary questions, we are compelled to take more than a passing interest in the efficiency of the British army; but I do not know that we shall derive much comfort from the perusal of Colonel Anson's pamphlet on 'Army Reserves and Militia Reform.' This ably-written little work dissipates a good many of our rose-coloured notions about our invincible forces; and we cannot but admit that there is considerable force, and a large amount of truth, in Colonel Anson's sharp criticisms on the way the War Department of the Government is managed. The author complains, very strongly and very justly, that the War Minister cannot be considered a thing apart. 'Our army,' writes the gallant Colonel, 'may go to pieces (as it has done), may be rotten at the core (as it is), but we cannot touch the War Minister, because it would involve a vote of want of confidence in the ministry. Directly there is a question raised which may be turned into a vote of want of confidence, the vote is taken—not *on* the question at issue, but *in spite* of it—on the general question whether a certain set of men are to hold office, or not!' This is, no doubt, the case; and while we may admire

the chivalry of the right honourable gentlemen who compose the ministry in electing to stand or fall together, we may venture to express a doubt whether, on the whole, the country would not be the better for the absence of such Quixotic sentiment; for it is hard to see, for instance, why the great work of National Education should be deprived of the services of Mr. W. E. Forster because Mr. Bruce is incompetent; or why the Lord Chancellor should resign the wool-sack because Mr. Ayrton commits a folly.

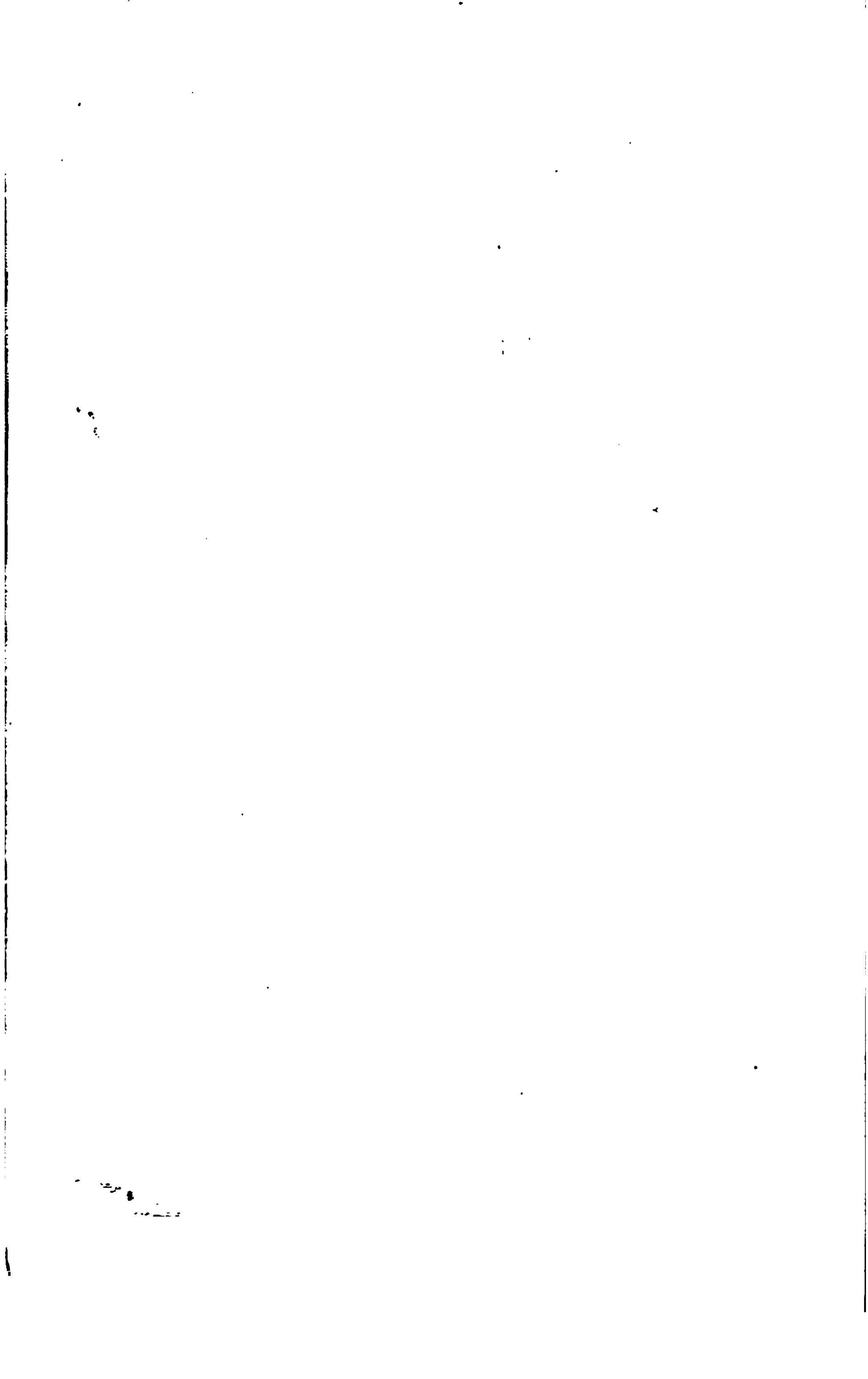
One other remark of Colonel Anson's I cannot forbear quoting. 'We boast,' he says, 'of our voluntary system, and a War Minister swells with pride as he dilates on the patriotism which enables the country to fill the ranks of the army by such a process, and compares it with the conscription of foreign nations. Let us drop clap-trap, and talk common sense. In 1870, at the close of the session, 20,000 recruits were required: by the time we had got 5,000 of them Germany held the remnant of the French army prisoners of war; by the time the full number was obtained Paris was taken, and there were on the soil of France 569,875 German infantry, 63,456 cavalry, and, including engineers, artillery, trains of all sorts and departments, with officers, staff, &c., no less than 1,000,000 of men, with 1,752 field-pieces. And what were the recruits we did get? Chiefly boys, badly fed, badly made, badly grown!' With these pregnant facts before them, I heartily advise the earnest and attentive perusal of Colonel Anson's brochure.

FREE LANCE.



Drawn by M. E. Edwards.]

"M.Y. MURIEL."





LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY, 1873.

A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Day.

By CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

CHAPTER XV.

STAINES fell head-foremost into the sea with a heavy plunge. Being an excellent swimmer, he struck out the moment he touched the water, and that arrested his dive, and brought him up with a slant, shocked and panting, drenched and confused. The next moment he saw, as through a fog—his eyes being full of water—something fall from the ship. He breasted the big waves, and swam towards it: it rose on the top of a wave, and he saw it was a life-buoy. Encumbered with wet clothes, he seemed impotent in the big waves; they threw him up so high, and down so low.

Almost exhausted, he got to the life-buoy, and clutched it with a fierce grasp and a wild cry of delight. He got it over his head, and placing his arms round the buoyant circle, stood with his breast and head out of water, gasping.

He now drew a long breath, and got his wet hair out of his eyes, already smarting with salt water, and, raising himself on the buoy, looked out for help.

He saw, to his great concern, the ship already at a distance. She seemed to have flown, and

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she was still drifting fast away from him.

He saw no signs of help. His heart began to turn as cold as his drenched body. A horrible fear crossed him.

But presently he saw the weather-boat filled, and fall into the water; and then a wave rolled between him and the ship, and he only saw her topmast.

The next time he rose on a mighty wave he saw the boats together astern of the vessel: but not coming his way; and the gloom was thickening, the ship becoming indistinct, and all was doubt and horror.

A life of agony passed in a few minutes.

He rose and fell like a cork on the buoyant waves—rose and fell, and saw nothing but the ship's lights, now terribly distant.

But at last, as he rose and fell, he caught a few fitful glimpses of a smaller light rising and falling like himself. ‘A boat!’ he cried, and, raising himself as high as he could, shouted, cried, implored for help. He stretched his hands across the water. ‘This way! this way!’

The light kept moving, but it

Then he rose carefully, and wedged himself into the corner of the raft opposite to that other figure, ominous relic of the wild voyage the new-comer had entered upon; he put both arms over the rail, and stood erect.

The moon was now up; but so was the breeze: fleecy clouds flew with vast rapidity across her bright face, and it was by fitful though vivid glances, Staines examined the raft and his companion.

The raft was large, and well made of timbers tied and nailed together, and a strong rail ran round it resting on several uprights. There were also some blocks of a very light wood screwed to the horizontal timbers, and these made it float high.

But what arrested and fascinated the man's gaze was his dead companion, sole survivor, doubtless, of a horrible voyage, since the raft was not made for one, nor by one.

It was a skeleton, or nearly, whose clothes the sea birds had torn, and pecked every limb in all the fleshy parts; the rest of the body had dried to dark leather on the bones. The head was little more than an eyeless skull; but, in the fitful moonlight, those huge hollow caverns seemed gigantic lamp-like eyes, and glared at him fiendishly, appallingly.

He sickened at the sight. He tried not to look at it; but it would be looked at, and threaten him in the moonlight, with great lack-lustre eyes.

The wind whistled, and lashed his face with spray torn off the big waves, and the water was nearly always up to his knees, and the raft tossed so wildly, it was all he could do to hold on in his corner; in which struggle, still those monstrous lack-lustre eyes, like lamps of death, glared at him in the moon, and all else dark,

except the fiery crests of the black mountain - billows, tumbling and raging all around.

What a night!

But, before morning, the breeze sank, the moon set, and a sombre quiet succeeded, with only that grim figure in outline dimly visible. Owing to the motion still retained by the waves, it seemed to nod and rear, and be ever preparing to rush upon him.

The sun rose glorious, on a lovely scene; the sky was a very mosaic of colours sweet and vivid, and the tranquil, rippling sea, peach - coloured to the horizon, with lines of diamonds where the myriad ripples broke into smiles.

Staines was asleep, exhausted. Soon the light awoke him, and he looked up. What an incongruous picture met his eye: that heaven of colour all above and around, and right before him, like a devil stuck in mid-heaven, that grinning corpse, whose fate foreshadowed his own.

But daylight is a great strengthener of the nerves; the figure no longer appalled him—a man who had long learned to look with Science's calm eye upon the dead. When the sea became like glass, and from peach-colour deepened to rose, he walked along the raft, and inspected the dead man. He found it was a man of colour, but not a black. The body was not kept in its place, as he had supposed, merely by being jammed into the angle caused by the rail; it was also lashed to the corner upright by a long, stout belt. Staines concluded this had kept the body there, and its companions had been swept away.

This was not lost on him: he removed the belt for his own use: he then found it was not only a belt, but a receptacle; it was nearly full of small hard substances that felt like stones.

When he had taken it off the body, he felt a compunction. "Ought he to rob the dead, and expose it to be swept into the sea at the first wave, like a dead dog?"

He was about to replace the belt, when a middle course occurred to him. He was a man who always carried certain useful little things about him, viz., needles, thread, scissors, and string. He took a piece of string, and easily secured this poor light skeleton to the raft. The belt he strapped to the rail, and kept for his own need.

And now hunger gnawed him. No food was near. There was nothing but the lovely sea and sky, mosaic with colour, and that grim, ominous skeleton.

Hunger comes and goes many times before it becomes insupportable. All that day and night, and the next day, he suffered its pangs; and then it became torture, but the thirst maddening.

Towards night fell a gentle rain. He spread a handkerchief and caught it. He sucked the handkerchief.

This revived him, and even allayed in some degree the pangs of hunger.

Next day was cloudless. A hot sun glared on his unprotected head, and battered down his enfeebled frame.

He resisted as well as he could. He often dipped his head, and as often the persistent sun, with cruel glare, made it smoke again.

Next day the same: but the strength to meet it was waning. He lay down and thought of Rosa, and wept bitterly. He took the dead man's belt, and lashed himself to the upright. That act, and his tears for his beloved, were almost his last acts of perfect reason: for next day came the delusions and the dreams, that

succeed when hunger ceases to torture, and the vital powers begin to ebb. He lay and saw pleasant meadows, with meandering streams, and clusters of rich fruit, that courted the hand and melted in the mouth.

Ever and anon they vanished, and he saw grim death looking down on him with those big cavernous eyes.

By-and-by, whether his body's eye saw the grim skeleton, or his mind's eye the juicy fruits, green meadows, and pearly brooks, all was shadowy.

So, in a placid calm, beneath a blue sky, the raft drifted dead, with its dead freight, upon the glassy purple, and he drifted, too, towards the world unknown.

There came across the waters to that dismal raft a thing none too common, by sea or land—a good man.

He was tall, stalwart, bronzed, and had hair like snow, before his time; for he had known trouble. He commanded a merchant steamer, bound for Calcutta, on the old route.

The man at the mast-head descried a floating wreck, and hailed the deck accordingly. The captain altered his course without one moment's hesitation, and brought up alongside, lowered a boat, and brought the dead, and the breathing man, on board.

A young middy lifted Staines in his arms from the wreck to the boat; he whose person I described in Chapter I. weighed now no more than that.

Men are not always rougher than women. Their strength and nerve enable them now and then to be gentler than buttery-fingered angels, who drop frail things through sensitive agitation, and break them. These rough

men saw Staines was hovering between life and death, and they handled him like a thing the ebbing life might be shaken out of in a moment. It was pretty to see how gingerly the sailors carried the sinking man up the ladder, and one fetched swabs, and the others laid him down softly on them at their captain's feet.

'Well done, men,' said he. 'Poor fellow! Pray Heaven we may not have come too late. Now stand aloof a bit. Send the surgeon aft.'

The surgeon came, and looked, and felt the heart. He shook his head, and called for brandy. He had Staines's head raised, and got half a spoonful of diluted brandy down his throat. But there was an ominous gurgling.

After several such attempts at intervals, he said plainly the man's life could not be saved by ordinary means.

'Then, try extraordinary,' said the captain. 'My orders are that he is to be saved. There is life in him. You have only got to keep it there. He must be saved; he shall be saved.'

'I should like to try Dr. Staines's remedy,' said the surgeon.

'Try it, then: what is it?'

'A bath of beef-tea. Dr. Staines says he applied it to a starved child—in the "Lancet."'

'Take a hundredweight of beef, and boil it in the coppers.'

Thus encouraged, the surgeon went to the cook, and very soon beef was steaming on a scale and at a rate unparalleled.

Meantime, Captain Dodd had the patient taken to his own cabin, and he and his servant administered weak brandy and water with great caution and skill.

There was no perceptible result. But, at all events, there was life and vital instinct left, or he could not have swallowed.

Thus they hovered about him for some hours, and then the bath was ready.

The captain took charge of the patient's clothes: the surgeon and a sailor bathed him in lukewarm beef-tea, and then covered him very warm with blankets next the skin. Guess how near a thing it seemed to them, when I tell you they dared not rub him.

Just before sunset his pulse became perceptible. The surgeon administered half a spoonful of egg-flip. The patient swallowed it.

By-and-by he sighed.

'He must not be left, day or night,' said the captain. 'I don't know who or what he is, but he is a man; and I could not bear him to die now.'

That night, Captain Dodd overhauled the patient's clothes, and looked for marks on his linen. There were none.

'Poor devil!' said Captain Dodd. 'He is a bachelor.'

Captain Dodd found his pocket-book, with bank-notes 200*l.* He took the numbers, made a memorandum of them, and locked the notes up.

He lighted his lamp, examined the belt, unripped it, and poured out the contents on his table.

They were dazzling. A great many large pieces of amethyst, and some of white topaz and rock crystal; a large number of smaller stones, carbuncles, chrysolites, and not a few emeralds. Dodd looked at them with pleasure, sparkling in the lamp-light.

'What a lot!' said he. 'I wonder what they are worth!' He sent for the first mate, who, he knew, did a little private business in precious stones. 'Masterton,' said he, 'oblige me by counting these stones with me, and valuing them.'

Mr. Masterton stared, and his mouth watered. However, he named the various stones and

valued them. He said there was one stone, a large emerald, without a flaw, that was worth a heavy sum by itself; but the pearls, very fine: and, looking at the great number, they must be worth a thousand pounds.

Captain Dodd then entered the whole business carefully in the ship's log: the living man he described thus:—‘About five feet six in height, and about fifty years of age.’ Then he described the notes and the stones very exactly, and made Masterton, the valuer, sign the log.

Staines took a good deal of egg-flip that night, and next day ate solid food; but they questioned him in vain; his reason was entirely in abeyance: he had become an eater, and nothing else. Whenever they gave him food, he showed a sort of fawning, animal gratitude. Other sentiment he had none, nor did words enter his mind any more than a bird's. And, since it is not pleasant to dwell on the wreck of a fine understanding, I will only say that they landed him at Cape Town, out of bodily danger, but weak, and his mind, to all appearance, a hopeless blank.

They buried the skeleton, read the service of the English Church over a Malabar heathen.

Dodd took Staines to the hospital, and left twenty pounds with the governor of it to cure him. But he deposited Staines's money and jewels with a friendly banker, and begged that the principal cashier might see the man, and be able to recognize him, should he apply for his own.

The cashier came and examined him, and also the ruby ring on his finger—a parting gift from Rosa—and remarked this was a new way of doing business.

‘Why, it is the only one, sir,’ said Dodd. ‘How can we give

you his signature? He is not in his right mind.’

‘Nor never will be.’

‘Don't say that, sir. Let us hope for the best, poor fellow.’

Having made these provisions, the worthy captain weighed anchor, with a warm heart and a good conscience. Yet the image of the man he had saved pursued him, and he resolved to look after him next time he should coal at Cape Town, homeward bound.

Staines recovered his strength in about two months; but his mind returned in fragments, and very slowly. For a long, long time he remembered nothing that had preceded his great calamity. His mind started afresh, aided only by certain fixed habits; for instance, he could read and write: but, strange as it may appear, he had no idea who he was; and, when his memory cleared a little on that head, he thought his surname was Christie, but he was not sure.

Nevertheless, the presiding physician discovered in him a certain progress of intelligence, which gave him great hopes. In the fifth month, having shown a marked interest in the other sick patients, coupled with a disposition to be careful and attentive, they made him a nurse, or rather a sub-nurse under the special orders of a responsible nurse. I really believe it was done at first to avoid the alternative of sending him adrift, or transferring him to the insane ward of the hospital. In this congenial pursuit he showed such watchfulness and skill, that by-and-by they found they had got a treasure. Two months after that, he began to talk about medicine, and astonished them still more. He became the puzzle of the establishment. The doctor

and surgeon would converse with him, and try and lead him to his past life; but when it came to that, he used to put his hands to his head, with a face of great distress, and it was clear some impassable barrier lay between his growing intelligence and the past events of his life. Indeed, on one occasion, he said to his kind friend the doctor, ‘The past!—a black wall! a black wall!’

Ten months after his admission he was promoted to be an attendant, with a salary.

He put by every shilling of it; for he said, ‘A voice from the dark past tells me money is everything in this world.’

A discussion was held by the authorities as to whether he should be informed he had money and jewels at the bank or not.

Upon the whole, it was thought advisable to postpone this information, lest he should throw it away; but they told him he had been picked up at sea, and both money and jewels found on him; they were in safe hands; only the person was away for the time. Still he was not to look upon himself as either friendless or moneyless.

At this communication he showed an almost childish delight, that confirmed the doctor in his opinion he was acting prudently, and for the real benefit of an amiable and afflicted person, not yet to be trusted with money and jewels.

CHAPTER XVII.

In his quality of attendant on the sick, Staines sometimes conducted a weak but convalescent patient into the open air; and he was always pleased to do this, for the air of the Cape carries health and vigour on its wings. He had

seen its fine recreative properties, and he divined, somehow, that the minds of convalescents ought to be amused; and so he often begged the doctor to let him take a convalescent abroad. Sooner than not, he would draw the patient several miles in a Bath chair. He rather liked this; for he was a Hercules, and had no egotism or false pride where the sick were concerned.

Now, these open-air walks exerted a beneficial influence on his own darkened mind. It is one thing to struggle from idea to idea; it is another, when material objects mingle with the retrospect; they seem to supply stepping-stones in the gradual resuscitation of memory and reason.

The ships going out of port were such a stepping-stone to him, and a vague consciousness came back to him of having been in a ship.

Unfortunately, along with this reminiscence came a desire to go in one again; and this sowed discontent in his mind: and the more that mind enlarged, the more he began to dislike the hospital and its confinement. The feeling grew, and bade fair to disqualify him for his humble office. The authorities could not fail to hear of this, and they had a little discussion about parting with him; but they hesitated to turn him adrift, and they still doubted the propriety of trusting him with money and jewels.

While matters were in this state, a remarkable event occurred. He drew a sick patient down to the quay one morning, and watched the business of the port with the keenest interest. A ship at anchor was unloading, and a great heavy boat was sticking to her side like a black leech. Presently this boat came away, and moved sluggishly towards the shore, rather by help

of the tide than of the two men who went through the form of propelling her with two monstrous sweeps, while a third steered her. She contained English goods: agricultural implements, some cases, four horses, and a buxom young woman with a thorough English face. The woman seemed a little excited, and, as she neared the landing place, she called out in jocund tones to a young man on the shore, 'It is all right, Dick; they are beauties:' and she patted the beasts as people do who are fond of them.

She stepped lightly ashore; and then came the slower work of landing her imports. She bustled about, like a hen over her brood, and wasn't always talking, but put in her word every now and then, never crossly, and always to the point.

Staines listened to her, and examined her with a sort of puzzled look; but she took no notice of him; her whole soul was in the cattle.

They got the things on board well enough; but the horses were frightened at the gangway, and jibbed. Then a man was for driving them, and poked one of them in the quarter; he snorted and reared directly.

'Man alive!' cried the young woman, 'that is not the way. They are docile enough, but frightened. Encourage 'em, and let 'em look at it. Give 'em time. More haste less speed, with timorous cattle.'

'That is a very pleasant voice,' said poor Staines, rather more dictatorially than became the present state of his intellect. He added, softly, 'A true woman's voice;' then gloomily, 'a voice of the past—the dark, dark past.'

At this speech intruding itself upon the short sentences of business, there was a roar of laughter;

and Phoebe Falcon turned sharply round to look at the speaker. She stared at him; she cried 'Oh!' and clasped her hands, and coloured all over. 'Why, sure,' said she, 'I can't be mistook. Those eyes—'tis you, Doctor, isn't it?'

'Doctor?' said Staines, with a puzzled look. 'Yes: I think they called me Doctor once. I'm an attendant in the hospital now.'

'Dick!' cried Phoebe, in no little agitation. 'Come here this minute.'

'What, afore I get the horses ashore?'

'Ay, before you do another thing, or say another word. Come here, now.' So he came, and she told him to take a good look at the man. 'Now,' said she, 'who is that?'

'Blest if I know,' said he.

'What, not know the man that saved your own life! Oh, Dick, what are your eyes worth?'

This discourse brought the few persons within hearing into one band of excited starers.

Dick took a good look, and said, 'I'm blest if I don't, though; it is the doctor that cut my throat.'

This strange statement drew forth quite a shout of ejaculations.

'Oh, better breathe through a slit than not at all,' said Dick. 'Saved my life with that cut, he did—didn't he, Pheeb?'

'That he did, Dick. Dear heart, I hardly know whether I am in my senses or not, seeing him a looking so blank. You try him.'

Dick came forward. 'Sure you remember me, sir. Dick Dale. You cut my throat, and saved my life.'

'Cut your throat! why, that would kill you.'

'Not the way you done it. Well, sir, you ain't the man you was, that is clear: but you was a

good friend to me, and there's my hand.'

'Thank you, Dick,' said Staines, and took his hand. 'I don't remember you. Perhaps you are one of the past. The past is a dead wall to me—a dark dead wall:' and he put his hands to his head with a look of distress.

Everybody there now suspected the truth, and some pointed mysteriously to their own heads.

Phœbe whispered an inquiry to the sick person.

He said, a little pettishly, 'All I know is, he is the kindest attendant in the ward, and very attentive.'

'Oh, then, he is in the public hospital.'

'Of course he is.'

The invalid, with the selfishness of his class, then begged Staines to take him out of all this bustle down to the beach. Staines complied at once, with the utmost meekness, and said, 'Good-bye, old friends; forgive me for not remembering you. It is my great affliction that the past is gone from me—gone, gone.' And he went sadly away, drawing his sick charge like a patient mule.

Phœbe Falcon looked after him, and began to cry.

'Nay, nay, Phœbe,' said Dick; 'don't ye take on about it.'

'I wonder at you,' sobbed Phœbe. 'Good people, I'm fonder of my brother than he is of himself, it seems; for I can't take it so easy. Well, the world is full of trouble. Let us do what we are here for. But I shall pray for the poor soul every night, that his mind may be given back to him.'

So then she bustled, and gave herself to getting the cattle on shore, and the things put on board her waggon.

But, when this was done, she said to her brother, 'Dick, I did

not think anything on earth could take my heart off the cattle and the things we have got from home: but I can't leave this without going to the hospital about our poor dear doctor: and it is late for making a start, any way—and you mustn't forget the newspapers for Reginald—he is so fond of them—and you must contrive to have one sent out regular after this, and I'll go to the hospital.'

She went, and saw the head doctor, and told him he had got an attendant there she had known in England in a very different condition, and she had come to see if there was anything she could do for him—for she felt very grateful to him, and grieved to see him so.

The doctor was pleased and surprised, and put several questions.

Then she gave him a clear statement of what he had done for Dick in England.

'Well,' said the doctor, 'I believe it is the same man; for, now you tell me this—yes, one of the nurses told me he knew more about medicine than she did. His name, if you please.'

'His name, sir?'

'Yes, his name. Of course you know his name. Is it Christie?'

'Doctor,' said Phœbe, blushing, 'I don't know what you will think of me, but I don't know his name. Laws forgive me, I never had the sense to ask it.'

A shade of suspicion crossed the doctor's face.

Phœbe saw it, and coloured to the temples. 'Oh, sir,' she cried, piteously, 'don't go for to think I have told you a lie! why should I? and indeed I am not of that sort, nor Dick neither. Sir, I'll bring him to you, and he will say the same. Well, we were all in terror and confusion, and I met him accidentally in the street. He

was only a customer till then, and paid ready money, so that is how I never knew his name; but if I hadn't been the greatest fool in England, I should have asked his wife.'

'What! he has a wife?'

'Ay, sir, the loveliest lady you ever clapped eyes on, and he is almost as handsome; has eyes in his head like jewels; 'twas by them I knew him on the quay, and I think he knew my voice again, said as good as he had heard it in past times.'

'Did he? Then, we have got him,' cried the doctor, energetically.

'La, sir.'

'Yes; if he knows your voice, you will be able in time to lead his memory back; at least, I think so. Do you live in Cape Town?'

'Dear heart, no. I live at my own farm, a hundred and eighty miles from this.'

'What a pity!'

'Why, sir?'

'Well—hum!'

'Oh, if you think I could do the poor doctor good by having him with me, you have only to say the word, and out he goes with Tom and me to-morrow morning. We should have started for home to-night, but for this.'

'Are you in earnest, madam?' said the doctor, opening his eyes. 'Would you really encumber yourself with a person whose reason is in suspense, and may never return?'

'But that is not his fault, sir. Why, if a dog had saved my brother's life, I'd take it home, and keep it all its days: and this is a man, and a worthy man. Oh, sir, when I saw him brought down so, and his beautiful eyes clouded like, my very bosom yearned over the poor soul: a kind act done in dear old England, who could see the man in trouble here, and not

repay it—ay, if it cost one's blood. But, indeed, he is strong and healthy, and hands are always scarce our way, and the odds are he will earn his meat one way or t'other; and, if he doesn't, why, all the better for me; I shall have the pleasure of serving him for nought that once served me for neither money nor reward.'

'You are a good woman,' said the doctor, warmly.

'There's better, and there's worse,' said Phœbe, quietly, and even a little coldly.

'More of the latter,' said the doctor, drily. 'Well, Mrs. ——?'

'Falcon, sir.'

'We shall hand him over to your care: but first—just for form—if you are a married woman, we should like to see Dick here: he is your husband, I presume.'

Phœbe laughed merrily. 'Dick is my brother; and he can't be spared to come here. Dick! he'd say black was white, if I told him to.'

'Then let us see your husband about it—just for form.'

'My husband is at the farm. I could not venture so far away, and not leave him in charge.' If she had said, 'I will not bring him into temptation,' that would have been nearer the truth. 'Let that fly stick on the wall, sir. What I do my husband will approve.'

'I see how it is. You rule the roost.'

Phœbe did not reply point-blank to that; she merely said, 'All my chickens are happy, great and small,' and an expression of lofty, womanly, innocent pride illuminated her face and made it superb for a moment.

In short, it was settled that Staines should accompany her next morning to Dale's Kloof Farm, if he chose. On inquiry, it appeared that he had just returned to the

hospital with his patient. He was sent for, and Phœbe asked him sweetly if he would go with her to her house, one hundred and eighty miles away, and she would be kind to him.

'On the water?'

'Nay, by land; but 'tis a fine country, and you will see beautiful deer and things running across the plains, and—'

'Shall I find the past again, the past again?'

'Ay, poor soul, that we shall, God willing. You and I, we will hunt it together.'

He looked at her, and gave her his hand. 'I will go with you. Your face belongs to the past, so does your voice.'

He then inquired, rather abruptly, had she any children. She smiled.

'Ay, that I have, the loveliest little boy you ever saw. When you are as you used to be, you will be his doctor, won't you?'

'Yes, I will nurse him, and you will help me find the past.'

Phœbe then begged Staines to be ready to start at six in the morning. She and Dick would take him up on their way.

While she was talking to him the doctor slipped out, and, to tell the truth, he went to consult with another authority, whether he should take this opportunity of telling Staines that he had money and jewels at the bank: he himself was half inclined to do so; but the other, who had not seen Phœbe's face, advised him to do nothing of the kind. 'They are always short of money, these colonial farmers,' said he; 'she would get every shilling out of him.'

'Most would; but this is such an honest face.'

'Well, but she is a mother, you say.'

'Yea.'

'Well, what mother could be just to a lunatic, with her own sweet angel babes to provide for?'

'That is true,' said Dr. —. 'Maternal love is apt to modify the conscience.'

'What I would do, I would take her address, and make her promise to write if he gets well; and, if he does get well, then write to him, and tell him all about it.'

Dr. — acted on this shrewd advice, and ordered a bundle to be made up for the traveller out of the hospital stores: it contained a nice light summer suit and two changes of linen.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Next morning, Staines and Dick Dale walked through the streets of Cape Town side by side. Dick felt the uneasiness of a sane man, not familiar with the mentally afflicted, who suddenly finds himself alone with one. Insanity turns men oftenest into sheep and hares; but it does now and then make them wolves and tigers; and that has saddled the insane in general with a character for ferocity. Young Dale, then, cast many a suspicious glance at his comrade, as he took him along. These glances were reassuring: Christopher's face had no longer the mobility, the expressive changes, that mark the superior mind; his countenance was monotonous: but the one expression was engaging; there was a sweet, patient, lamb-like look: the glorious eye a little troubled and perplexed, but wonderfully mild. Dick Dale looked and looked, and his uneasiness vanished. And the more he looked the more did a certain wonder creep over him, and make him scarce believe the thing he knew; viz., that a learned doctor had saved him from the jaws of

death by rare knowledge, sagacity, courage, and skill, combined ; and that mighty man of wisdom was brought down to this lamb, and would go north, south, east, or west, with sweet and perfect submission, even as he, Dick Dale, should appoint. With these reflections honest Dick felt his eyes get a little misty, and to use those words of Scripture, which nothing can surpass or equal, his bowels yearned over the man.

As for Christopher, he looked straight forward, and said not a word till they cleared the town ; but, when he saw the vast flowery vale, and the far-off violet hills, like Scotland glorified, he turned to Dick with an ineffable expression of sweetness and good fellowship, and said, ‘ Oh, beautiful !—We’ll hunt the Past together.’

‘ We—will—so,’ said Dick, with a sturdy and, indeed, almost a stern resolution.

Now, this he said, not that he cared for the Past, nor intended to waste the Present by going upon its predecessor’s trail ; but he had come to a resolution—full three minutes ago—to humour his companion to the top of his bent, and say ‘ Yes’ with hypocritical vigour to everything not directly and immediately destructive to him and his.

The next moment they turned a corner and came upon the rest of their party, hitherto hidden by the apricot hedge and a turning in the road. A blue-black Kafir, with two yellow Hottentot drivers, man and boy, was harnessing, in the most primitive mode, four horses on to the six oxen attached to the waggon ; and the horses were flattening their ears, and otherwise resenting the incongruity. Meantime a fourth figure, a colossal young Kafir woman, looked on superior with folded arms, like a sable Juno, looking

down with that absolute composure upon the struggles of man and other animals, which Lucretius and his master Epicurus assigned to the Divine nature. Without jesting, the grandeur, majesty, and repose of this figure were unsurpassable in nature, and such as have vanished from sculpture two thousand years and more.

Dick Dale joined the group immediately, and soon arranged the matter. Meantime, Phœbe descended from the waggon, and welcomed Christopher very kindly, and asked him if he would like to sit beside her, or to walk.

He glanced into the waggon ; it was covered and curtained, and dark as a cupboard. ‘ I think,’ said he, timidly, ‘ I shall see more of the Past out here.’

‘ So you will, poor soul,’ said Phœbe, kindly, ‘ and better for your health : but you must not go far from the waggon, for I’m a Fidget ; and I have got the care of you now, you know, for want of a better. Come, Ucatella ; you must ride with me, and help me sort the things ; they are all higgledy piggledy. So those two got into the waggon through the back curtains. Then the Kafir driver flourished his kambok, or long whip, in the air, and made it crack like a pistol, and the horses reared, and the oxen started and slowly bored in between them, for they whinnied, and kicked, and spread out like a fan all over the road ; but a flick or two from the terrible kambok soon sent them bleeding and trembling and rubbing shoulders, and the oxen, mildly but persistently goring their recalcitrating haunches, the intelligent animals went ahead, and revenged themselves by breaking the harness. But that goes for little in Cape travel.

The body of the waggon was long and low and very stout. The

tilt strong and tight-made. The roof inside, and most of the sides, lined with green baize. Curtains of the same to the little window and the back. There was a sort of hold literally built full of purchases; a small fire-proof safe; huge blocks of salt; saws, axes, pickaxes, adzes, flails, tools innumerable, bales of wool and linen stuff, hams, and two hundred empty sacks strewn over all. In large pigeon-holes fixed to the sides were light goods, groceries, collars, glaring cotton handkerchiefs, for Phœbe's aboriginal domestics, since not every year did she go to Cape Town, a twenty days' journey by waggon: things dangled from the very roof; but no hard goods there, if you please, to batter one's head in a spill. Outside were latticed grooves with tent, tent-poles, and rifles. Great pieces of cork, and bags of hay and corn, hung dangling from mighty hooks—the latter to feed the cattle, should they be compelled to camp out on some sterile spot in the Veldt, and methinks to act as buffers, should the whole concern roll down a nullah or little precipice, no very uncommon incident in the blessed region they must pass to reach Dale's Kloof.

Harness mended; fresh start. The Hottentots and Kafir vociferated and yelled, and made the unearthly row of a dozen wild beasts wrangling: the horses drew the bullocks, they the waggon; it crawled and creaked, and its appendages wobbled finely.

Slowly they creaked and wobbled past apricot hedges and detached houses and huts, and got into an open country without a tree, but here and there a stunted camelthorn. The soil was arid, and grew little food for man or beast; yet, by a singular freak of nature, it put forth abundantly

things that here at home we find it harder to raise than homely grass and oats; the ground was thickly clad with flowers of delightful hues; pyramids of snow or rose-colour bordered the track; yellow and crimson stars bejewelled the ground, and a thousand bulbous plants burst into all imaginable colours, and spread a rainbow carpet to the foot of the violet hills; and all this glowed, and gleamed, and glittered in a sun shining with incredible brightness and purity of light, but, somehow, without giving a headache or making the air sultry.

Christopher fell to gathering flowers, and interrogating the Past by means of them; for he had studied botany: the Past gave him back some pitifully vague ideas. He sighed. 'Never mind,' said he to Dick, and tapped his forehead: 'it is here: it is only locked up.'

'All right,' said Dick; 'nothing is lost when you know where 'tis.'

'This is a beautiful country,' suggested Christopher. 'It is all flowers. It is like the garden of — the garden of — locked up.'

'It is de—light—ful,' replied the self-compelled optimist, sturdily. But here nature gave way; he was obliged to relieve his agricultural bile by getting into the cart and complaining to his sister. 'Twill take us all our time to cure him. He have been bepraising this here soil, which it is only fit to clean the women's kettles. 'Twouldn't feed three larks to an acre, I know; no, *nor half so many.*'

'Poor soul! mayhap the flowers have took his eye. Sit here a bit, Dick. I want to talk to you about a many things.'

While these two were conversing, Ucatella, who was very fond of Phœbe, but abhorred waggons,

stepped out and stalked by the side, like an ostrich, a camelopard, or a Taglioni; nor did the effort with which she subdued her stride to the pace of the procession appear: it was the poetry of walking. Christopher admired it a moment; but the noble expanse tempted him, and he strode forth like a giant, his lungs inflating in the glorious air, and soon left the waggon far behind.

The consequence was that when they came to a halt, and Dick and Phœbe got out to release and water the cattle, there was Christopher's figure retiring into space.

'Hanc rem ægrè tulit Phœbe,' as my old friend Livy would say. 'Oh dear! oh dear! if he strays so far from us, he will be eaten up at nightfall by jackals, or lions, or something. One of you must go after him.'

'Me go, missy,' said Ucatella, zealously, pleased with an excuse for stretching her magnificent limbs.

'Ay, but mayhap he will not come back with *you*: will he, Dick?'

'That he will, like a lamb.' Dick wanted to look after the cattle.

'Yuke, my girl,' said Phœbe, 'listen. He has been a good friend of ours in trouble; and now he is not quite right *here*. So be very kind to him, but be sure and bring him back, or keep him till we come.'

'Me bring him back alive, certain sure,' said Ucatella, smiling from ear to ear. She started with a sudden glide, like a boat taking the water, and appeared almost to saunter away, so easy was the motion; but when you looked at the ground she was covering, the stride, or glide, or whatever it was, was amazing:

'She seemed in walking to devour the way.'

Christopher walked fast, but nothing like this; and, as he stopped at times to botanize and gaze at the violet hills, and interrogate the Past, she came up with him about five miles from the halting-place.

She laid her hand quietly on his shoulder, and said, with a broad genial smile, and a musical chuckle, 'Ucatella come for you. Missy want to speak you.'

'Oh! very well:' and he turned back with her directly; but she took him by the hand to make sure: and they marched back peaceably, in silence, and hand in hand. But he looked and looked at her, and at last he stopped dead short, and said, a little arrogantly, 'Come! I know *you*. You are not locked up:' and he inspected her point-blank. She stood like an antique statue, and faced the examination. 'You are "the noble savage,"' said he, having concluded his inspection.

'Nay,' said she. 'I be the housemaid.'

'The housemaid!'

'Iss, the housemaid, Ucatella. So come on.' And she drew him along, sore perplexed.

They met the cavalcade a mile from the halting-place, and Phœbe apologised a little to Christopher. 'I hope you'll excuse me, sir,' said she; 'but I am just for all the world like a hen with her chickens; if but one strays, I'm all in a flutter till I get him back.'

'Madam,' said Christopher, 'I am very unhappy at the way things are locked up. Please tell me truly, is this "the housemaid," or "the noble savage?"'

'Well, she is both, if you go to that, and the best creature ever breathed.'

'Then she is "the noble savage."'

'Ay, so they call her, because she is black.'

'Then, thank Heaven,' said

Christopher, 'the Past is not all locked up.'

That afternoon they stopped at an inn. But Dick slept in the cart. At three in the morning they took the road again, and creaked along supernaturally loud under a purple firmament studded with huge stars, all bright as moons, that lit the way quite clear, and showed black things innumerable flitting to and fro; these made Phœbe shudder, but were no doubt harmless; still Dick carried his double rifle, and a revolver in his belt.

They made a fine march in the cool, until some slight mists gathered, and then they halted and breakfasted near a silvery kloof, and watered the cattle. While thus employed, suddenly a golden tinge seemed to fall like a lash on the vapours of night; they scuttled away directly, as jackals before the lion; the stars paled, and, with one incredible bound, the mighty sun leaped into the horizon, and rose into the sky. In a moment all the lesser lamps of heaven were out, though late so glorious, and there was nothing but one vast vaulted turquoise, and a great flaming topaz mounting with eternal ardour to its centre.

This did not escape Christopher. 'What is this?' said he. 'No twilight. The tropics!' He managed to dig that word out of the Past in a moment.

At ten o'clock the sun was so hot that they halted, and let the oxen loose till sundown. Then they began to climb the mountains.

The way was steep and rugged; indeed, so rough in places, that the cattle had to jump over the holes, and, as the waggon could not jump so cleverly, it jolted appallingly, and many a scream issued forth.

Near the summit, when the poor beasts were dead beat, they got into clouds and storms, and the wind rushed howling at them through the narrow pass with such fury, it flattened the horses' ears, and bade fair to sweep the whole cavalcade to the plains below.

Christopher and Dick walked close behind, under the lee of the waggon. Christopher said in Dick's ear, 'D'ye hear that? Time to reef topsails, captain.'

'It is time to do *something*,' said Dick. He took advantage of a jutting rock, drew the waggon half behind it and across the road, propped the wheels with stones, and they all huddled to leeward, man and beast indiscriminately.

'Ah!' said Christopher, approvingly; 'we are lying to: a very—proper—course.'

They huddled and shivered three hours, and then the sun leaped into the sky, and lo! a transformation scene. The cold clouds were first rosy fleeces, then golden ones, then gold dust, then gone: the rain was big diamonds, then crystal sparks, then gone: the rocks and the bushes sparkled with gem-like drops, and shone and smiled.

The shivering party bustled, and toasted the potent luminary in hot coffee; for Phœbe's waggon had a stove and chimney; and then they yoked their miscellaneous cattle again, and breasted the hill. With many a jump, and bump, and jolt, and scream from inside, they reached the summit, and looked down on a vast slope, flowering but arid, a region of gaudy sterility.

The descent was more tremendous than the ascent, and Phœbe got out, and told Christopher she would liever cross the ocean twice than this dreadful mountain once.

The Hottentot with the reins was now bent like a bow all the

time, keeping the cattle from flowing diverse over precipices, and the Kafir with his kambok was here and there and everywhere, his whip flicking like a lancet, and cracking like a horse-pistol, and the pair vied like Apollo and Pan, not which could sing sweetest, but swear loudest. Having the lofty hill for some hours between them and the sun, they bumped, and jolted, and stuck in mud-holes, and flogged and swore the cattle out of them again, till at last they got to the bottom, where ran a turbid kloof or stream. It was fordable, but the recent rains had licked away the slope; so the existing bank was two feet above the stream. Little recked the demon drivers or the parched cattle; in they plunged promiscuously, with a flop like thunder, followed by an awful splashing. The waggon stuck fast in the mud, the horses tied themselves in a knot, and rolled about in the stream, and the oxen drank imperturbably.

'Oh, the salt! the salt!' screamed Phœbe, and the rocks re-echoed her lamentations.

The waggon was inextricable, the cattle done up, the savages lazy: so they staid for several hours. Christopher botanized; but not alone. Phœbe drew Ucatella apart, and explained to her that when a man is a little wrong in the head, it makes a child of him: 'So,' said she, 'you must think he is your child, and never let him out of your sight.'

'All right,' said the sable Juno, who spoke English ridiculously well, and rapped out idioms; especially 'Come on,' and 'All right.'

About dusk, what the drivers had foreseen, though they had not the sense to explain it, took place; the kloof dwindled to a mere gutter, and the waggon stuck high and dry. Phœbe waved her hand-

kerchief to Ucatella. Ucatella, who had dogged Christopher about four hours without a word, now took his hand, and said, 'My child, missy wants us; come on;' and so led him unresistingly.

The drivers, flogging like devils, cursing like troopers, and yelling like hyenas gone mad, tried to get the waggon off; but it was fast as a rock. Then Dick and the Hot-tentot put their shoulders to one wheel, and tried to prize it up, while the Kafir *encouraged* the cattle with his thong. Observing this, Christopher went in, with his sable custodian at his heels, and heaved at the other embedded wheel. The waggon was lifted directly, so that the cattle tugged it out, and they got clear. On examination, the salt had just escaped.

Says Ucatella to Phœbe, a little ostentatiously, 'My child is strong and useful; make little missy a good slave.'

'A slave! Heaven forbid!' said Phœbe. 'He'll be a father to us all, once he gets his head back: and I do think it is coming—but very slow.'

The next three days offered the ordinary incidents of African travel, but nothing that operated much on Christopher's mind, which is the true point of this narrative; and, as there are many admirable books of African travel, it is the more proper I should confine myself to what may be called the relevant incidents of the journey.

On the sixth day from Cape Town, they came up with a large waggon stuck in a mud-hole. There was quite a party of Boers, Hot-tentots, Kafirs, round it, armed with whips, shamboks, and oaths, lashing and cursing without intermission, or any good effect; and

there were the wretched beasts straining in vain at their choking yokes, moaning with anguish, trembling with terror, their poor mild eyes dilated with agony and fear, and often, when the blows of the cruel shamboks cut open their bleeding flesh, they bellowed to Heaven their miserable and vain protest against this devil's work.

Then the Past opened its stores, and lent Christopher a word.

'BARBARIANS!' he roared, and seized a gigantic Kafir by the throat, just as his shambok descended for the hundredth time. There was a mighty struggle, as of two Titans; dust flew round the combatants in a cloud; a whirling of big bodies, and down they both went with an awful thud, the Saxon uppermost, by Nature's law.

The Kafir's companions, amazed at first, began to roll their eyes and draw a knife or two; but Dick ran forward, and said, 'Don't hurt him: he is wrong *here*.'

This representation pacified them more readily than one might have expected. Dick added, hastily, 'We'll get you out of the hole *our way*, and cry quits.'

The proposal was favourably received, and the next minute Christopher and Ucatella at one wheel, and Dick and the Hottentot at the other, with no other help than two pointed iron bars bought for their shepherds, had effected what sixteen oxen could not. To do this Dick Dale had bared his arm to the shoulder; it was a stalwart limb, like his sister's, and he now held it out all swollen and corded, and slapped it with his other hand. 'Look'ee here, you chaps,' said he: 'the worst use a man can put that there to is to go cutting out a poor beast's heart for not doing more than he can. You are good fellows, you Kafirs; but I think you have sworn never to put your

shoulder to a wheel. But, bless your poor silly hearts, a little strength put on at the right place is better than a deal at the wrong.'

'You hear that, you Kafir chaps?' inquired Ucatella, a little arrogantly—for a Kafir.

The Kafirs, who had stood quite silent to imbibe these remarks, bowed their heads with all the dignity and politeness of Roman senators, Spanish grandees, etc.; and one of the party replied gravely, 'The words of the white man are always wise.'

'And his arm blanked* strong,' said Christopher's late opponent, from whose mind, however, all resentment had vanished.

Thus spake the Kafirs; yet to this day never hath a man of all their tribe put his shoulder to a wheel, so strong is custom in South Africa; probably in all Africa; since I remember St. Augustin found it stronger than he liked, at Carthage.

Ucatella went to Phœbe, and said, 'Missy, my child is good and brave.'

'Bother you and your child!' said poor Phœbe. 'To think of his flying at a giant like that, and you letting of him. I'm all of a tremble from head to foot:' and Phœbe relieved herself with a cry.

'Oh, missy!' said Ucatella.

'There, never mind me. Do go and look after your child, and keep him out of more mischief. I wish we were safe at Dale's Kloof, I do.'

Ucatella complied, and went botanizing with Dr. Staines: but that gentleman, in the course of his scientific researches into camomile flowers and blasted heath, which were all that lovely region afforded, suddenly succumbed and

* I take this very useful expression from a delightful volume by Mr. Boyle.

stretched out his limbs, and said, sleepily, 'Good-night—U—cat—' and was off into the land of Nod.

The waggon, which, by-the-way, had passed the larger but slower vehicle, found him fast asleep, and Ucatella standing by him, as ordered, motionless and grand.

'Oh, dear! what now?' said Phœbe: but, being a sensible woman, though in the hen and chickens line, she said, "'Tis the fighting and the excitement. 'Twill do him more good than harm, I think:' and she had him bestowed in the waggon, and never disturbed him night nor day. He slept thirty-six hours at a stretch; and, when he awoke, she noticed a slight change in his eye. He looked at her with an interest he had not shown before, and said, 'Madam, I know you.'

'Thank God for that,' said Phœbe.

'You kept a little shop, in the other world.'

Phœbe opened her eyes with some little alarm.

'You understand—the world that is locked up—for the present.'

'Well, sir, so I did: and sold you milk and butter. Don't you mind?'

'No—the milk and butter—they are locked up.'

The country became wilder, the signs of life miserably sparse; about every twenty miles the farmhouse or hut of a degenerate Boer, whose children and slaves pigged together, and all ran jostling, and the mistress screamed in her shrill Dutch, and the Hottentots all chirped together, and confusion reigned for want of method: often they went miles, and saw nothing but a hut or two, with a nude Hottentot eating flesh, burnt a little, but not cooked, at the door; and the kloofs became deeper and more turbid, and

Phœbe was in agony about her salt, and Christopher advised her to break it in big lumps, and hang it all about the waggon in sacks; and she did, and Ucatella said, profoundly, 'My child is wise;' and they began to draw near home, and Phœbe to fidget; and she said to Christopher, 'Oh, dear! I hope they are all alive and well: once you leave home, you don't know what may have happened by then you come back. One comfort, I've got Sophy: she is very dependable, and no beauty, thank my stars.'

That night, the last they had to travel, was cloudy, for a wonder, and they groped with lanterns.

Ucatella and her child brought up the rear. Presently there was a light pattering behind them. The swift-eared Ucatella clutched Christopher's arm, and, turning round, pointed back, with eyeballs white and rolling. There were full a dozen animals following them, whose bodies seemed colourless as shadows, but their eyes little balls of flaming lime-light.

'GUN!' said Christie, and gave the Kafir's arm a pinch. She flew to the caravan: he walked backwards, facing the foe. The waggon was halted, and Dick ran back with two loaded rifles. In his haste he gave one to Christopher, and repented at leisure: but Christopher took it, and handled it like an experienced person, and said, with delight, 'VOLUNTEER.' But with this the cautious animals had vanished like bubbles. But Dick told Christopher they would be sure to come back; he ordered Ucatella into the waggon, and told her to warn Phœbe not to be frightened if guns should be fired. This soothing message brought Phœbe's white face out between the cur-

tains, and she implored them to get into the waggon, and not tempt Providence.

'Not till I have got thee a kāross of jackal's fur.'

'I'll never wear it!' said Phœbe, violently, to divert him from his purpose.

'Time will show,' said Dick, drily. 'These varmint are on and off like shadows, and as cunning as Old Nick. We two will walk on quite unconcerned like, and as soon as ever the varmint are at our heels you give us the office; and we'll pepper their fur—won't we, doctor?'

'We—will—pepper—their fur,' said Christopher, repeating what to him was a lesson in the ancient and venerable English tongue.

So they walked on expectant; and by-and-by the four-footed shadows with large lime-light eyes came stealing on; and Phœbe shrieked, and they vanished before the men could draw a bead on them.

'Thou's no use at this work, Pheeb,' said Dick. 'Shut thy eyes, and let us have Yuke.'

'Iss, master: here I be.'

'You can bleat like a lamb; for I've heard ye.'

'Iss, master. I bleats beautiful;' and she showed snowy teeth from ear to ear.

'Well, then, when the varmint are at our heels, draw in thy woolly head, and bleat like a young lamb. They won't turn from that, I know, the vagabonds.'

Matters being thus prepared, they sauntered on; but the jackals were very wary. They came like shadows, so departed—a great many times: but, at last, being reinforced, they lessened the distance, and got so close, that Ucatella withdrew her head, and bleated faintly inside the waggon. The men turned, levelling their

rifles, and found the troop within twenty yards of them. They wheeled directly: but the four barrels poured their flame, four loud reports startled the night, and one jackal lay dead as a stone, another limped behind the flying crowd, and one lay kicking. He was soon despatched, and both carcases flung over the patient oxen; and good-bye jackals for the rest of that journey.

Ucatella, with all a Kafir's love of fire-arms, clapped her hands with delight. 'My child shoots loud and strong,' said she.

'Ay, ay,' replied Phœbe; 'they are all alike; wherever there's men, look for quarrelling and firing off. We had only to sit quiet in the waggon.'

'Ay,' said Dick, 'the cattle especially—for it is them the varmint were after—and let 'em eat my Hottentots.'

At this picture of the cattle inside the waggon, and the jackals supping on cold Hottentot alongside, Phœbe, who had no more humour than a cat, but a heart of gold, shut up, and turned red with confusion at her false estimate of the recent transaction in fur.

When the sun rose they found themselves in a tract somewhat less arid and inhuman; and, at last, at the rise of a gentle slope, they saw, half a mile before them, a large farmhouse partly clad with creepers, and a little plot of turf, the fruit of eternal watering; item, a flower-bed; item, snow-white paling; item, an air of cleanliness and neatness scarcely known to those dirty descendants of clean ancestors, the Boers. At some distance a very large dam glittered in the sun, and a troop of snow-white sheep were watering at it.

'ENGLAND!' cried Christopher.
'Ay, sir,' said Phœbe; 'as nigh

as man can make it.' But soon she began to fret: 'Oh, dear! where are they all? If it was me, I'd be at the door looking out. Ah, there goes Yuke to rouse them up.'

'Come, Pheeb, don't you fidget,' said Dick, kindly. 'Why, the lazy lot are scarce out of their beds by this time.'

'More shame for 'em. If they were away from me, and coming home, I should be at the door day and night, I know. Ah!'

She uttered a scream of delight; for just then out came Ucatella, with little Tommy on her shoulder, and danced along to meet her. As she came close, she raised the chubby child high in the air, and he crowed; and then she lowered him to his mother, who rushed at him, seized, and devoured him with a hundred inarticulate cries of joy and love unspeakable.

'NATURE!' said Christopher, dogmatically, recognizing an old acquaintance, and booking it as one more conquest gained over the Past. But there was too much excitement over the cherub to attend to him. So he watched the woman gravely, and began to moralize with all his might. 'This,' said he, 'is what we used to call maternal love; and all animals had it, and that is why the noble savage went for him. It was very good of you, Miss Savage,' said the poor soul, sententiously.

'Good of her!' cried Phœbe. 'She is all goodness. Savage! find me a Dutchwoman like her. I'll give her a good cuddle for it:' and she took the Kafir round the neck, and gave her a hearty kiss, and made the little boy kiss her too.

At this moment out came a colly dog, hunting Ucatella by scent alone, which process landed him headlong in the group; he gave loud barks of recognition, fawned on Phœbe and Dick, smelt

poor Christopher, gave a growl of suspicion, and lurked about squinting, dissatisfied, and lowering his tail.

'Thou art wrong, lad, for once,' said Dick; 'for he's an old friend, and a good one.'

'After the dog, perhaps some Christian will come to welcome us,' said poor Phœbe.

Obedient to the wish, out walked Sophy, the English nurse, a scraggy woman, with a very cocked nose and thin pinched lips, and an air of respectability and pertness mingled. She dropped a short curtsy, shot the glance of a basilisk at Ucatella, and said, stiffly, 'You are welcome home, ma'am.' Then she took the little boy as one having authority. Not that Phœbe would have surrendered him: but just then Mr. Falcon strolled out, with a cigar in his mouth, and Phœbe, with her heart in her mouth, flew to meet him. There was a rapturous conjugal embrace, followed by mutual inquiries; and the waggon drew up at the door. Then, for the first time, Falcon observed Staines, saw at once he was a gentleman, and touched his hat to him, to which Christopher responded in kind, and remembered he had done so in the locked-up Past.

Phœbe instantly drew her husband apart by the sleeve. 'Who do you think that is? You'll never guess. 'Tis the great doctor that saved Dick's life in England with cutting of his throat. But oh, my dear, he is not the man he was. He is afflicted. Out of his mind partly. Well, we must cure him, and square the account for Dick. I'm a proud woman at finding him, and bringing him here to make him all right again, I can tell you. Oh, I am happy, I am happy. Little did I think to be so happy as I am. And, my dear, I have brought you a

whole sackful of newspapers, old and new.'

'That is a good girl. But tell me a little more about him. What is his name?'

'Christie.'

'Dr. Christie?'

'No doubt. He wasn't an apothecary, or a chemist, you may be sure, but a high doctor, and the cleverest ever was or ever will be: and isn't it sad, love, to see him brought down so? My heart yearns for the poor man: and then his wife—the sweetest, loveliest creature you ever—oh!'

Phoebe stopped very short, for she remembered something all of a sudden; nor did she ever again give Falcon a chance of knowing that the woman, whose presence had so disturbed him, was this very Dr. Christie's wife. 'Curious!' thought she to herself, 'the world to be so large, and yet so small:' then aloud, 'They are unpacking the waggon; come, dear. I don't think I have forgotten anything of yours. There's cigars, and tobacco, and powder, and shot, and bullets, and everything to make you comfortable, as my duty 'tis; and—oh, but I'm a happy woman.'

Hottentots, big and little, clustered about the waggon. Treasure after treasure was delivered with cries of delight; the dogs found out it was a joyful time, and barked about the wheeled treasury; and the place did not quiet down till sunset.

A plain but tidy little room was given to Christopher, and he slept there like a top. Next morning his nurse called him up to help her water the grass. She led the way with a tub on her head and two buckets in it. She took him to the dam; when she got there she took out the buckets, left one on the bank, and gave the other to Christie. She then went down the steps till the water was

up to her neck, and bade Christie fill the tub. He poured eight bucketsful in. Then she came slowly out, straight as an arrow, balancing this tub full on her head. Then she held out her hands for the two buckets. Christie filled them, wondering, and gave them to her. She took them like toy buckets, and glided slowly home with this enormous weight, and never spilled a drop. Indeed, the walk was more smooth and noble than ever, if possible.

When she reached the house she hailed a Hottentot, and it cost the man and Christopher a great effort of strength to lower her tub between them.

'What a vertebral column you must have!' said Christopher.

'You must not speak bad words, my child,' said she. 'Now, you water the grass and the flowers.' She gave him a watering-pot, and watched him maternally; but did not put a hand to it. She evidently considered this part of the business as child's play, and not a fit exercise of her powers.

It was only by drowning that little oasis twice a day that the grass was kept green and the flowers alive.

She found him other jobs in course of the day, and, indeed, he was always helping somebody or other, and became quite ruddy, bronzed, and plump of cheek, and wore a strange look of happiness, except at times when he got apart and tried to recall the distant Past. Then he would knit his brow, and looked perplexed and sad.

They were getting quite used to him, and he to them, when one day he did not come in to dinner. Phoebe sent out for him; but they could not find him.

The sun set. Phoebe became greatly alarmed, and even Dick was anxious.

They all turned out, with guns

and dogs, and hunted for him beneath the stars.

Just before daybreak Dick Dale saw a fire sparkle by the side of a distant thicket. He went to it, and there was Ucatella seated, calm and grand as antique statue, and Christopher lying by her side, with a shawl thrown over him. As Dale came hurriedly up, she put her finger to her lips, and said, 'My child sleeps. Do not wake him. When he sleeps, he hunts the Past, as Colly hunts the springbok.'

'Here's a go,' said Dick. Then, hearing a chuckle, he looked up, and was aware of a comical appendage to the scene. There hung, head downwards, from a branch, a Kafir boy, who was, in fact, the brother of the stately Ucatella, only went farther into antiquity for his models of deportment; for, as she imitated the antique marbles, he reproduced the habits of that epoch, when man roosted, and was arboreal. Wheeled somersaults, and, above all, swinging head downwards from a branch, were the sweeteners of his existence.

'Oh! you are there, are you?' said Dick.

'Iss,' said Ucatella. 'Tim good boy. Tim found my child.'

'Well,' said Dick, 'he has chosen a nice place. This is the clump the last lion came out of, at least they say so. For my part, I never saw an African lion: Falcon says they've all took ship and gone to England. However, I shall stay here with my rifle till daybreak. 'Tis tempting Providence to lie down on the skirt of a wood for Lord knows what to jump out on ye unawares.'

Tim was sent home for Hottentots, and Christopher was carried home, still sleeping, and laid on his own bed.

He slept twenty-four hours more, and, when he was fairly

awake, a sort of mist seemed to clear away in places, and he remembered things at random. He remembered being at sea on the raft with the dead body; that picture was quite vivid to him. He remembered, too, being in the hospital, and meeting Phœbe, and every succeeding incident; but as respected the more distant past, he could not recall it by any effort of his will. His mind could only go into that remoter past by material stepping-stones; and what stepping-stones he had about him here led him back to general knowledge, but not to his private history.

In this condition he puzzled them all strangely at the farm; his mind was alternately so clear and so obscure. He would chat with Phœbe, and sometimes give her a good practical hint; but the next moment, helpless for want of memory, that great faculty without which judgment cannot act, having no material.

After some days of this, he had another great sleep. It brought him back the distant past in chapters. His wedding day. His wife's face and dress upon that day. His parting with her: his whole voyage out: but, strange to say, it swept away one-half of that which he had recovered at his last sleep, and he no longer remembered clearly how he came to be at Dale's Kloof.

Thus his mind might be compared to one climbing a slippery place, who gains a foot or two, then slips back; but, on the whole, gains more than he loses.

He took a great liking to Falcon. That gentleman had the art of pleasing, and the tact never to offend.

Falcon affected to treat the poor soul's want of memory as a common infirmity; pretended he was himself very often troubled in the same way, and advised him to

read the newspapers. 'My good wife,' said he, 'has brought me a whole file of the "Cape Gazette." I'd read them if I was you. The deuce is in it, if you don't rake up something or other.'

Christopher thanked him warmly for this: he got the papers to his own little room, and had always one or two in his pocket for reading. At first he found a good many hard words that puzzled him; and he borrowed a pencil of Phœbe, and noted them down. Strange to say, the words that puzzled him were always common words, that his unaccountable memory had forgotten: a hard word, he was sure to remember that.

One day he had to ask Falcon the meaning of 'spendthrift.' Falcon told him briefly. He could have illustrated the word by a striking example; but he did not. He added, in his polite way, 'No fellow can understand all the words in a newspaper. Now, here's a word in mine—"Anemometer;" who the deuce can understand such a word?'

'Oh, that is a common word enough,' said poor Christopher. 'It means a machine for measuring the force of the wind.'

'Oh, indeed,' said Falcon; but did not believe a word of it.

One sultry day Christopher had a violent headache, and complained to Ucatella. She told Phœbe, and they bound his brows with a wet handkerchief, and advised him to keep indoors. He sat down in the coolest part of the house, and held his head with his hands, for it seemed as if it would explode into two great fragments.

All in a moment the sky was overcast with angry clouds, whirling this way and that. Huge drops of hail pattered down, and the next minute came a tremen-

dous flash of lightning, accompanied, rather than followed, by a crash of thunder close over their heads.

This was the opening. Down came a deluge out of clouds that looked mountains of pitch, and made the day night but for the fast and furious strokes of lightning that fired the air. The scream of wind and awful peals of thunder completed the horrors of the scene.

In the midst of this, by what agency I know no more than Science or a sheep does, something went off inside Christopher's head, like a pistol-shot. He gave a sort of scream, and dashed out into the weather.

Phœbe heard his scream and his flying footstep, and uttered an ejaculation of fear. The whole household was alarmed, and, under other circumstances, would have followed him; but you could not see ten yards.

A chill sense of impending misfortune settled on the house. Phœbe threw her apron over her head, and rocked in her chair.

Dick himself looked very grave.

Ucatella would have tried to follow him; but Dick forbade her. 'Tis no use,' said he. 'When it clears, we that be men will go for him.'

'Pray Heaven you may find him alive!'

'I don't think but what we shall. There's nowhere he can fall down to hurt himself, nor yet drown himself, but our dam; and he has not gone that way. But—'

'But what?'

'If we do find him, we must take him back to Cape Town, before he does himself, or some one, a mischief. Why, Phœbe, don't you see the man has gone raving mad?'

AT KNEBWORTH.

UPWARDS of a century ago, before the first principles of liberal learning and education had been impugned in England, and it was considered the reverse of well-bred to point an observation with a classical allusion or a classical quotation, through a considerate fear lest one might be speaking to one's neighbour in what should practically prove to be an unknown tongue, a great wit and statesman paid a morning call to a highly estimable Duke. The wit and statesman was Horace Walpole; the Duke was the lineal ancestor of the present head of the illustrious race of Cavendish. Devonshire House, in Piccadilly, had just been completed: its ducal proprietor was a man of sound judgment, of unbiassed integrity, not without great parts, but with talents of solid value rather than superficial glitter. Unfortunately for his brilliant caller, the Duke happened to be out, and Mr. Horace Walpole had forgotten his card-case. The companion and the rival of Selwyn and Sheridan was in no way disconcerted at the omission. He asked for pen and paper; wrote, not his name, but the following couplet, which he left on the table of the absent owner of Chatsworth and Bolton:

‘Ut dominus domus est: non extra
fulta columnis
Marmoreis splendet; quod tenet intus
habet.’

The Latin language has no happier epigram. Inadequately and literally translated, it will run thus:

‘Like house, like owner; not without
the glow
Of marble pillars’ wealth, within its
show.’

It is much to be regretted that there probably lives in the present day no successor of Horace Wal-

pole equal to the task of summing up in a Latin couplet of the same elegance and terseness the chief intellectual and literary characteristics of the great writer who sleeps in Westminster Abbey, in contrast, or, more correctly to speak, in union with the most striking aspect of his favourite home at Knebworth. For there are only four words in the epigram already quoted in any degree applicable to Lord Lytton, and his Hertfordshire park. ‘*Ut dominus domus est*’—that is true enough. In other respects no two men could be more unlike than Edward, first Baron Lytton, and William, third Duke of Devonshire. If the character of a man may be legitimately inferred from the manner in which his own private and particular apartments are furnished and kept, *à fortiori* does it follow that the *tout-ensemble* of the entire house of a great writer will be the eloquent and exhaustive expression of the idiosyncrasies of his genius? Lord Lytton’s genius was what Knebworth is. In that fair demesne, fringed by the rich woods and bordered by the spreading fields of Hertfordshire, in the arrangements and fittings of the house, in the disposition of the grounds, may be seen at the present day the microcosm of Lord Lytton’s mind as an author of romance, the full reflection of the more pronounced peculiarities of his inner life. The dramatic mixture of the classical and romantic elements; the imagination of the scholar and enthusiast, the poet and the historian combined, revelling in the resuscitated glories of heraldic legend and feudal splendour; the deep appreciation of all that is best and most enduring in the world’s literature; the keen relish for all that is

fullest of fancy and of grace; the admiration of the noble and the love of the beautiful, which were with Lord Lytton not so much a dogma as an instinct; the aesthetic aspirations of the writer of poems, and plays, and novels—in juxtaposition with the sterling common-sense, the method, and to a large extent the tastes of the English country gentleman; in a word, the distinctive traits of him whose pen gave the world 'Pelham' and 'Zanoni,' 'My Novel' and 'The Last Days of Pompeii,' 'The Caxtons' and 'The Last of the Barons,' 'Kenelm Chillingly' and 'The Coming Race,' are to be observed, *veluti descripta tabella*, in or about Lord Lytton's house at Knebworth. On what point, what individual feature in the volumes to which the *imprimatur* of the illustrious name is prefixed, would you care to dwell? Is it those qualities in which Lord Lytton most resembles Sir Walter Scott—his historic passion; his skill in making the canvas of his fictions glow with the faces of the heroes of our national annals; his consummate art in making men who have become names live again, and act as their own interpreters; his ardent devotion for all that is chivalrous, all that is noble, all that is self-sacrificing—is it these which most delight you? You shall meet with the visible and material record of each of them in the house and grounds at Knebworth. Is it that brimming humour, that kindly satire, that bright intellect, that quick perception, that readiness to guess the character and the motives of men and women, that almost intuitive knowledge of and sympathy with every side of our complex English life, abounding in every page of the series of matchless novels which commences with 'The Caxtons'? We reply: these, too, you shall witness suggested or

declared, indicated or expressed, at Knebworth—shall see them in the picturesque surroundings of the famous historical dwelling, and in the atmosphere of businesslike method which surrounds the place. Or, lastly, is it your humour to trace the manifestations of that spirit of Horatian elegance and ease, that air of classic grace, the enthusiastic love of those imperishable models of style and thought which are always old, and yet which are ever fresh, conspicuous in all Lord Lytton's writings? Our answer is still the same: you have but further to explore the remotest nooks and angles of Knebworth Park. *Ut domus est scriptor;* and Knebworth is at once the epitome and the chart of the tastes, of the literary and historic affinities of Lord Lytton, novelist, essayist, poet.

The illustration which accompanies this article supplies an obvious instance of the justice of these remarks. Lord Lytton was a born enthusiast of the Venusian, and when he entered upon the possession of his maternal estate it was his first care to erect for the bard an altar and to dedicate to him a shrine. Horace's garden at Knebworth remains a picturesque monument of the loyalty of the most versatile and perhaps, take him for all in all, the greatest writer of our generation, for the graceful poet of wit and wine, whose natural elegance has kept him a favourite for twice ten centuries, and whose inexhaustible store of moral aphorisms has made him a textbook for all ages. The popularity of the son of the Venusian freedman is a remarkable phenomenon in literature—a popularity which is confined to no one class of men, no single order of minds. In the very admirable essay which precedes his translation of the Horatian Odes, and which first

appeared some five years ago in 'Blackwood's Magazine,' Lord Lytton has successfully attempted to analyse the causes of this world-wide and enduring feeling towards the Roman lyrist of whom Scaliger said of more than one of his poems that it was *merum nectar*. 'Whatever his faults and deficiencies,' then wrote Lord Lytton, 'he' (Horace) 'has remained unexcelled in that special gift of genius which critics define by the name of charm. . . . It is an era in the life of the schoolboy when he first commences his acquaintance with Horace. He gets favourite passages by heart with a pleasure which (Homer alone excepted) no other ancient poet inspires. Throughout life the lines so learnt remain in his memory, rising up alike in grave and gay moments, and applying themselves to varieties of incidents and circumstances with the felicitous suppleness of proverbs. Perhaps in the interval between boyhood and matured knowledge of the world the attractive influence of Horace is suspended in favour of some bolder poet adventuring far beyond the range of his temperate though sunny genius, into the extremes of heated passion or frigid metaphysics. But as men advance in years they again return to Horace—again feel the young delight in his healthful wisdom, his manly sense, his exquisite combination of playful irony and cordial earnestness.' It is worth while to follow Lord Lytton in his enumeration of the traits which have secured for the Venusian a position absolutely unique in literature. Take the first peculiar excellence: it is his personal character and temperament rather than his intellectual capacity—in a word, his genial humanity. Next to the charm of his humanity comes 'his inclination towards the agreeable aspects of our mortal state. He

invests the virtues of patience amidst the trials of adversity with the dignity of a serene sweetness, and exalts over the frivolities of worldly pleasure with associations of heartfelt friendship and the refinements of music and song. Garlands entwined with myrtle, and wine-cups perfumed with nard, seem fit emblems of the banqueter, who when he indulges the genius invokes the muse, and invites "the Grace." Yet with all this there is in Horace never wanting a singular manliness of sentiment. The voluptuous strains of his festive lute are interwoven with melodies and words which stir the heart as with a trumpet, and which were calculated to rouse the Roman youth of the day to courage, honour, and patriotism. In the third place, Horace is essentially the poet of eclecticism: he is neither stoic nor epicurean, but both. He sees good in every system and truth in every creed. *Per contra*, he sees what is bad and false. He knows that frailty accompanies virtue, and that error follows knowledge as the shadow does the body. He therefore aims at no immaculate ideal of excellence, ethical or philosophic. Again, Horace preserves, in a degree unknown to those who, like Pope and Boileau, resemble him more or less on the town-bred side of his character, the simple delight in rural nature, which makes him the favourite companion of those whom cool woodlands peopled with beings of fable "set apart from the crowd." He might be as familiar with Sir Philip Sidney in the shades of Penshurst, as with Lord Chesterfield in the saloons of Mayfair. And out of this rare combination of practical wisdom and poetical sentiment there grows that noblest part of his moral teaching, which is distinct from schools and sects, and touches at times upon chords

more spiritual than those who do not look below the surface would readily detect. Hence, in spite of his occasional sins, he has always found indulgent favour with the clergy of every church. Among the dozen books which form the library of the village *curé* of France, Horace is sure to be one, and the greatest dignitaries of our own church are among his most sedulous critics and his warmest panegyrists. . . . Thus we find his thoughts interwoven with Milton's later meditations; and Condorcet, baffled in aspirations of human perfectibility on earth, dies in his dungeon with his Horace at his side, open at the verse which says by what acts of constancy and fortitude in mortal travail Pollux and Hercules attained to the Citadels of Light.'

This is a masterly piece of criticism—dispassionate, discriminating, just. 'If,' said a great statesman, 'you wish to study the perfection of expression wed to thought, appropriate to all occasions of life, take Horace:

"Nocturnā versate manu, versate diurnā."

'If,' said Mr. Walker, the author of the charming 'Original,' late police magistrate of the metropolis, and *bon-vivant* of no mean order, 'you are anxious pleasantly and profitably to employ the odd half-hours and twenty minutes in the course of the day, which you would otherwise lose, keep a Horace or Montaigne in your pocket—but for choice I recommend Horace.'

To come from the Venusian himself to the garden named after him at Knebworth. What it is, the reader can see for himself or herself in the illustration which the present number of 'London Society' contains. Forty years ago it was a swamp. The illustrious author of 'The Caxtons' re-

cognised, with the quick eye which was so peculiarly his own, its picturesque adaptability, and set to work to fashion it after his fancy. The task was not completed at once; the business of drainage proved slow and difficult. But at last the waters finally separated themselves from the land. Where there had been morass, a bosky pleasure-ground appeared, bordered by a tiny lake, whose sloping sides were lined with flowers and shrubs. A gravel path wound along the lakelet's marge, on which wide-stretching trees flung their chequered shade. The entrance to this classic haunt is through an arbour, which completely isolates it from the rest of the grounds. The arbour itself is immediately contiguous to a labyrinth of shrubs:

'Ut quondam Cretā fertur Labyrinthus
in altâ
Parietibus textum cæcis iter ancipi-
temque
Mille viis habuisse dolum, qui signa
sequendi
Falleret indeprensus et irremedialis
error.'

'Those who delight in perplexity,' says a writer who knew both Knebworth and Lord Lytton well, 'may enter the maze, which in days gone by we remember to have done, and, while there hopelessly imprisoned, the dinner-bell rang, and we were at last forced to break through our prison walls somewhat to their damage.' The path beneath the sheltering trees, the water on one hand, on the other a bank covered with rock and fern, shell and flower, suddenly gives place to a green oasis of turf—one of those sequestered *saltus* which Horace loved so well to describe. Here there are green recesses; here dark grottoes; here caverns, *vivoque sedilia saxo*. Irresistibly one is reminded of the famous garden of the Emperor Hadrian at Tivoli, where 'he en-

deavoured to perpetuate his own recollections of Greece—erecting buildings, to which he gave the names Poëcile and Lyceum, by whose side he planted the grove of an academy; and he carried the stream of an ideal Peneus through the pleasant vale of an imitative Tempe.* Yonder is the central nook of all. Tread reverently; speak low; you are about to enter the presence of the bard himself. There, mounted on a pedestal, stands the bust of that familiar face: it is Horace's own self; and there, grouped about him, is the Pan whose protection he so oft poetically invoked for his flocks and herds; what time he exchanged the smoke and tumult of Rome for the cool silence of the fruitful orchards of Tibur; there the effigies of the fauns and satyrs whom he beheld dancing to the strains of Pan's pipe; there those who were his companions on that ever-to-be-remembered journey to Brundisium, Caius Cilnius Mæcen-sas, and Lucius Virgilius Maro: nay, there look down upon us the sculptured lineaments of the great Augustus himself, the descendant of Romulus, the ruler of the seven-hilled city, the glory and the protection of the Roman race. For a time we seem to have escaped outside the world. You might be in the grotto of Egeria—all is so silent, so cool, so classical. As a matter of fact, you are in the metropolitan county of Hertfordshire, barely a score of miles from the roaring, seething tide of London life. A moment more, and you emerge from the dim religious light of these cavernous aisles into the gaudy glitter of day. The nineteenth-century sun shines down upon your head, and at your feet stretches an expanse

of flower-beds, gaudy with all the colours of the rainbow. You find yourself, on reflection, a little startled and somewhat shocked by the fact that the present enlightened age does its best to disparage the poetry of Horace, and the study of the language in which Horace wrote. May the day be far distant when the aim of these blasphemous educational innovators shall be accomplished! Physical science is a good thing, no doubt. Still, we would sooner see the Odes of a Horace studied by our sons, than the best manual which Professor Huxley ever wrote. Somehow we fancy that our ingenuous youth are more likely to acquire that learning which will soften their manners, and not suffer them to become brutal, from the perusal of the works of the Venusian and the bright band of his fellow-authors who are his countrymen, than from the study of all the treatises which a Darwin has penned.

We have spoken of Knebworth and its maze and grounds as the picturesque counterpart of the literary works and genius of Lord Lytton. We have heard Lord Lytton's explanation of the many-sided popularity which the writings of Horace enjoy; we have seen the poet visibly enshrined in the centre of Lord Lytton's demesne: it will not be more difficult to detect the traces of the Horatian influence in Lord Lytton's writings. It is seen, indeed, in the ease and elegance of his diction; in the clear crystal of his sparkling style. These are generalities, and the matter admits of a treatment much more convincing and precise. If the author of 'The Caxtons' displays a greater resemblance to the genius which gave us 'Tristram Shandy' than to any other single writer of English prose, the author with

* Preface to 'Greece, Pictorial, Descriptive, and Historical.' By the present Bishop of Lincoln.

whom he possesses the next largest number of points of affinity is, unquestionably, Horace. 'I should have,' writes Lord Lytton, 'small respect for the critic who should advise the youthful author to emulate the style of Sterne; only writers the most practised could safely venture on an occasional restrained imitation of his frolicsome zoneless graces.' Horace, on the other hand, like Addison, is 'a safe and eternal model of what all imitation pleases, to which all approach is scholarship.' On the novels of Lord Lytton, seeing the blast of criticism of them which his death has evoked, we will not dwell for illustration of the position we have assumed. We prefer to restrict ourselves to those of his works which are less generally known—the inimitable series of Essays published under the title of 'Caxtoniana.' These charming dissertations, grave and gay, sportive and severe, contain, as in miniature, all the essential excellences which their author as a novelist has shown. They are perfect microcosms of his manner—brilliantly faithful samples of that more abundant treat with which he has furnished us in the pages of his more elaborate romances. Take that, of its kind, absolutely perfect composition, and altogether charming, 'On the Differences between the Urban and Rural Temperament.' Is it possible to read it and not to see that the mind which conceived it was saturated with the same passionate attachment to the country, which was, in an eminent degree, the characteristic of the life and writings of Lord Lytton's Venetian prototype? Why, one is reminded at every turn of the famous Fourteenth Epistle (Bk. I.), in which Horace gently reproaches his bailiff for his hankering after the chimney-pots of the city, and,

placing his own aspirations in juxtaposition with those of his servant, gives us the exquisite picture of the two types of men whom Lord Lytton also describes. When the author of 'Caxtoniana' was a boy, he tells us, he made the acquaintance of a distinguished man who had retired from the din of cities to the beauty of the country. 'If,' said the youthful Bulwer, already ambitious and a poet, 'I ever win a tenth part of your fame, sir, I don't think I shall run away with it into the country, in which one has nothing to look at except ants and gossamers.' Said the famous veteran, after an interval of silent meditation, very quietly, and as if more to himself than me, 'I shall soon leave the world: men and women I may hope to see again elsewhere; but shall I see elsewhere corn-fields and grain, gossamer and ants?' Again he paused a moment or two, and then added: 'As we lose hold of our five senses, do we wake up a sixth which has before been dormant—the sense of Nature?—or have we certain instincts, akin to Nature, which are suppressed and overlaid by our reason, and revive only at the age when our reason begins to fail us?' Again, speaking *in propria persona*: 'There was a time when I considered every hour spent out of capitals as time wasted; when the desire to compete and to combat—the thirst for achievements opening one upon the other in the upward march of an opposed career . . . gave to me—as they give to most active men in the unflagging energies of youth—a delight in the vista of gas-lamps, and the hubbub of the great mart for the interchange of ideas. But now—I love the country as I did when a little child, before I had admitted into my heart that ambition which is the first fierce lesson we learn

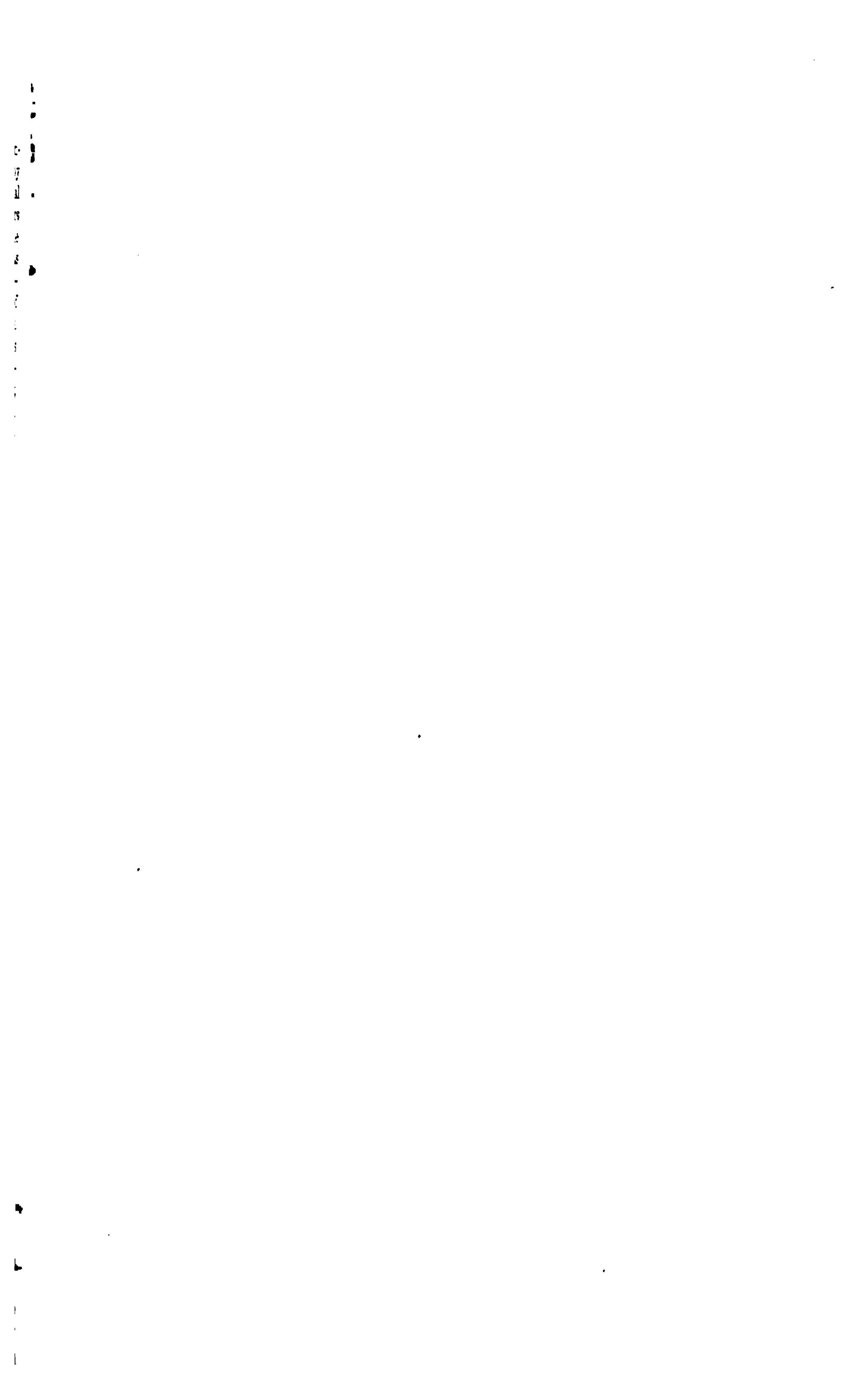
at school. Is it partly that these trees here remind us that we are growing old?—older than we are these hollow stems all covered with rejoicing leaves . . . Nature has no voice that wounds the self-love; her coldest wind nips no credulous affection. The friend with whom we once took sweet counsel we have left in the crowd a stranger—perhaps a foe! The woman in whose eyes, some twenty years ago, a paradise seemed to open in the midst of a fallen world, we passed the other day with a frigid bow. She wore rouge and false hair! But those wild flowers under the hedgerow — those sparkles in the happy waters—no friendship has gone from them! —their beauty has no simulated freshness; their smile has no fraudulent deceit! This musical and melodious prose—what is it but an enlargement of the Horatian text, *Rura senes laudant*—and in the true Horatian spirit? The place occupied by the satire in the literature of the Augustan age, and in that of Queen Anne, is now filled partly by the novel, partly by the essay. It may be said, with perfect truth, that no epic writer since Horace's time has imbibed so large a measure of the true Horatian spirit of satire as Lord Lytton. Horace selected hexameters as the vehicles for communicating it to his fellow-men. Lord Lytton has chosen the matchless power of the Caxton novels and the Caxton essays: had Horace been an Englishman of the present century, it is far from improbable that he might have made an exactly similar choice. Though the rural temperament is the one which pleases most the essayist of 'Caxtoniana,' he can yet understand those people 'who, from first to last, would rather look out on a back yard in St. James's than on the vales of Fiesole in the hues

of a Tuscan autumn, or the waters of Windermere in the hush of an English June. Moreover, the town temperament has this advantage over the rural—a man may by choice fix his home in cities, yet have the most lively enjoyment of the country when he visits it for recreation; while the man who by choice settles habitually in the country there deposits his household gods, and there moulds his habits of thought to suit the life he has selected, usually feels an actual distress, an embarrassment, a pain, when, from time to time, he drops a stranger on the London pavement. He cannot readily brace his mind to the quick exertion for all small objects that compose the activity of the Londoner. He has no interest in the gossip about people he does not know; the wet weather does not affect him as it does the man who has no crops to care for. When the Londoner says, "What a fine day!" he shakes his head dolefully, and mutters, "Sadly in want of rain!" This kind of soliloquy—half poetic, half philosophic—half serious, half jesting, which is one of the most remarkable and frequently recurrent of literary notes in the works of Lord Lytton—is the distinctive characteristic, in a degree scarcely less, of Horace. Lord Lytton himself has spoken of Montaigne as the Horace of Essayists: 'An appellation,' he says, 'which appears to me appropriate, not only from its subjective and personal expression of his genius, but from his genial amenity; from his harmonious combination of sportiveness and earnestness; and, above all, from the full attainment of the highest rank in the subjective order of intellect, when the author, in the mirror of his individual interior life, glasses the world around and without him, and,

not losing his own identity, yet identifies himself with infinite varieties of mankind.' Both the title and the criticism are equally applicable to the writer who gave the one and possesses the other.

After all, 'Horace's garden' is but one of many features in the Knebworth grounds. Knebworth is something more than a noble mansion, flanked by a stately terrace in a picturesque park—a park whose pride and beauty lay in its long avenues of Spanish and horse-chestnut trees, its herds of noble deer, and girdled by gardens, in which were flower-beds varied as the patterns of a Turkey or Persian carpet, full of rare plants, with classic statues standing forth from a background of deep shrubbery, famous for its roses and Wellingtonias, its tropical flowers, and its ferns. Knebworth is an historical house, and had been from the time of Edward III. the home of the Lytton ancestors of the great writer who has been taken from us, renowned in counsel and in war. Literally, Knebworth, or Knebba worth, signifies the state of Knebba, a British chieftain in the old days before William the Norman had raised his standard at Hastings. Under the very walls of Knebworth there had been more than one skirmish in the war between Charles I. and his Parliament. The house itself has not been unvisited by royalty. In the year of the Spanish Armada, its proprietor being then Sir Rowland Lytton, Commander of the forces of Essex and Herts at Tilbury Fort, there came to Knebworth, and stayed there some days, Queen Elizabeth herself. The bed in which Her Gracious Majesty slept still exists, and the old tapestry which screened the royal slumberer is even yet partially

preserved. The whole of the interior of the house is pervaded by just that atmosphere of feudal splendour and pride which colours the pages of 'The Last of the Barons.' Only a man who was justly proud of a lineage stretching far back into the mists of our national story, and on the long roll-call of an illustrious ancestry, could, one felt instinctively, be the owner of the house; only an author whose imagination could live as easily in the past as in the present, who recognized a congenial element in the records of the national heroes who have shed such a lustre upon the pages of our annals, only an author whom it properly pleased to think that he was the descendant of leaders worthy of their place and people, could have written the historical novels of Lord Lytton. Here, again, *ut dominus domus est*; here, again, the character of the man and the writer is aptly symbolised by the internal decorations of the house. Those who may wish to have the truth impressed upon them by the testimony of their eyes may be safely recommended to pass a half hour some afternoon at the Dudley Gallery. There they will see three sketches executed by the artist who supplies us with the illustration to which we have already called attention, Mr. T. R. Macquoid, of the interior of Knebworth — one, the curtain which covers the entrance to the grand hall; another, the great hall itself; and, third, the grand staircase. Lord Lytton might, not without good reason, be proud of the rare Venetian hangings, more than two hundred years old, pendant in the arched entrance into the banqueting chamber of his ancestors; of the oaken screen, dating back from the time of Elizabeth; and of the collection of gold and



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"HORACE'S GARDEN AT KNEBWORTH."



silver plate ranged in the buffets that ran along the hall on either side. The ceiling—the *laqueata tecta* of Horace—was completed in the reign of Henry VII., and is emblazoned with the armorial bearings of Sir Rowland Lytton. Inigo Jones designed the chimney-piece and wainscot panelling, which were added in the time of Charles I.; on the walls are displayed suits of armour and trophies of war, and with each breath of wind that enters through the doorway and the windows, there sway to and fro the banners that are hung from the vaulted roof, and on which are depicted the various battles, from Hastings to Alma, that have witnessed the prowess and the courage of some member of the Lytton family. The mailed cenotaphs of heroes are ranged along the great staircase which leads to the grand drawing-room.

At the extreme end of the house and communicating with the drawing-room on the right, an ante-chamber intervening, was Lord Lytton's writing-room. 'He stays there,' writes to us a correspondent who was staying last autumn at Knebworth, 'perfectly isolated from the rest of the house. All noise was effectually intercepted, and the effect which any noise whatever had upon Lord Lytton when he was at work was irritating in the extreme. The writing-room was richly furnished, and in the same style as the roof of the house—Elizabethan—with a few choice pictures on the wall. While he was occupied with composition the floor was strewed with books and papers. Lord Lytton was singularly jealous as to the admission of strangers into this, his sanctum. Perhaps the only friend of his lordship's who had ever seen the interior of it more than a very few times was his *fidus Achates*, Mr. Aston Baylis,

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his companion in the Continental travels of his earlier days, and with whom he had formed the entire collection of art treasures to be found at Knebworth. Not even Mr. Baylis, nor any other intimate of the house, was permitted to disturb Lord Lytton, when in his study, before the hour of one had sounded. His lordship never made his appearance earlier in the morning than ten o'clock; and it was easy to see from his manner whether or not he was about to devote the forenoon and first hour of the noon to composition. In that case he would be *distract* and miraculously silent, and after he had gone through the empty ceremony of a very unsubstantial meal in the great hall, would stalk off to the private chamber that he loved so much. So soon as one o'clock came, Lord Lytton would emerge from his studious seclusion. At that hour he seemed to strike work for the day. The afternoon he would pass sometimes in sauntering about the grounds, sometimes in driving, sometimes in fishing, the only kind of sport about which he seemed to care. After dinner, in the evening, he used to sit in the great drawing-room, and there he would take up such a book as Nash's 'Mansions,' and talk for an hour together on such points of architectural art as happened to suggest themselves. Here, too, he would, when the only visitors at Knebworth were his intimate friends, kindle his Turkish hookah, and drop his jewels of speech, enveloped by the blue wreaths of the smoke. Lord Lytton never, so far as I know, in his later days, dedicated more than those three morning hours to his literary labours. Yet, in addition to all these, he was, as a correspondent, scrupulously punctual and prolific. It was nothing less

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than a mystery how he contrived to find the time for all this.'

The mystery of our correspondent is in great measure explained by the religiously methodical habits of Lord Lytton himself. 'A brain,' he writes in 'Caxtoniana,' 'habitually active will not be ordered to rest. It is not like the inanimate glebe of a farm, which, when exhausted, you restore by the simple precept, "Lie fallow." A mind, once cultivated, will not lie fallow for half-an-hour.' The secret which enabled Lord Lytton to do so much in a very little while, was the same as that which gave him the command over so many different topics, and which stamps his genius with a freshness that is all his own. 'A man of genius,' he himself tells us, 'is inexhaustible only in proportion as he is always nourishing his genius, both in mind and body. Where nourishment ceases, vitality fails. To sail round the world, you must put in at many harbours, if not for rest, at least for supplies. . . . The wider your range of thought, the greater your chance and choice of original combinations. He who is always observant will be always various.' In these words we have the 'mystery' of Lord Lytton's fertility and freshness, his originality and his unique power of work, explained.

There is yet another essentially characteristic feature in the Knebworth grounds. Passing through one of the noble avenues of the park to the lake, there is visible on the other side a picturesque fishing-cottage, built in the old English style—panels of dark wood, framing plaster work. The structure itself is girt with groups of Scotch firs, planted at the restoration of Charles II., and in the background stands a dense wood. Inside are three rooms, and the chief of these was the favourite

summer study of Lord Lytton, where he wrote not a few of his most famous books. This lake it was in which Lord Lytton never wearied of his favourite pastime of angling. What reader of 'My Novel,' who remembers John Burley, does not remember also 'the one-eyed perch for which he came to fish, and which he never caught?' or how, when he gave it up at last, his baits all gone, and the line broken among the weeds, the baffled man found comfort? And are not some of the scenes which have delighted us most in 'Kenelm Chillingly' those of which the centre is the fishing-cottage on the Thames? But hear how, in 'Caxtoniana,' Lord Lytton himself speaks of angling: 'For myself, though no participator in the joys of more violent sport, I have a pleasure that I cannot reconcile to my notions of the tenderness due to dumb creatures in the tranquil cruelty of angling. I can only palliate the wanton destructiveness of my amusement by trying to assure myself that my pleasure does not spring from the success of the treachery I practise towards a poor little fish, but rather from that innocent revelry in the luxuriance of summer life which only anglers enjoy to the utmost. When I have cast my perfidious line over the waves of the lake, or into the dips and hollows of a babbling trout stream, with all its romantic curvatures into creek and cove, a thousand images born from poetic sentiment, and giving birth in turn to moralising thought, present themselves to my noonday reverie; images which would never have taken place had I been pacing to and fro the gravel-walks of my garden. Above all, Nature herself, in that spiritual beauty which keeps opening out from the green deeps as our eye rests on the surface, just as out

from some grand author, meaning on meaning, secret on secret, will open as we continue to read and reread the page, Nature herself fascinates and appeals to me when I stand on the grassy banks, and see earth and sky blending light and shadow on the glass of mysterious waters. This miserable pastime of angling — the base seduction of a credulous fellow-creature with a fraudulent bait—certainly it is not this which charms me, hour after hour, to solitary moss-grown banks. The pastime is but an excuse for listening so patiently to the vague whispering of the universal mother. Why do I need that idle rod to draw me forth to the waterside? Why, if no snare of mine near yon water-lily menaces the scaly flocks of Proteus—why could I not recline or lie as contentedly

under the bowing elm-tree, watching the reeds quiver where the pike stirs, or noting the wistful eyes of the grasshopper, as he halts on the grass, wondering whether I be friend or foe? I know not why. Ask the gunner whether he would walk thirty miles a day over stubble and turnips if he had a staff in his hand instead of a Manton.' Is it possible to conceive a more graceful *apologia piscationis*? It is no part of our purpose to tell our readers the tale of Kenelm Chillingly, with which they are probably already familiar. We have merely desired here to touch on certain aspects of Lord Lytton's genius, equally discernible, though in different ways, in his works and in his Hertfordshire home; and we have done our work.

T. H. S. Escott.

MY MURIEL.

THE gloaming's reddening light lies low
Upon the woodland ways and seas,
And cool winds from the hill-side blow,
And, passing, whisper to the trees.
Yet is not this as other days—
My love, I will the meaning tell;
What say the seas and woodland ways,
To thee, my Muriel?

Love's day is o'er, love's sun is set,
But us the sunset gleams enfold,
For sweet love lingers with us yet,
Love's sunset changing all to gold;
For suns must set, and love must die,
And lips, not hearts, must say, " 'Tis well,"
And hearts must bid a long good-bye,
My sweet, sweet Muriel.

In golden aftertime forget
The one who loved, staked all, and lost;
Forget me, love, sweet love, and yet
Canst thou forget how dear thou wast?
Farewell! farewell! it must be said,
Though my fond heart should break—farewell!
Forget me, think my love is dead,
As thine is, Muriel.

GORDON CAMPBELL.

SOPRANO AND TENOR.

Bertie Heytesmere's Story.

LE^T me begin like an 'acting edition.'

Scene: Miss Alice Rawnsley's drawing-room, 15, Burleigh Place, Bayswater. A quantity of musical publications, songs, programmes of concerts, &c., strewn about, betoken her profession. She is seated at the table talking to Bertie Heytesmere, *moi qui vous parle*.

'That is the exact state of the case,' I say, replacing a letter in its envelope. 'It is written with decision, very black ink, and an entire absence of beating about the bush. If I do not forthwith set about making a very serious proposition to a girl whom I particularly dislike—which unfortunately precludes the possibility of my making a similar proposition to a girl of whom I am particularly fond—Mr. Luttrell will "cease to be enabled to subscribe himself, my affectionate uncle, George." Genial person, Uncle George, but decided!'

There was, I may admit to you, more than a leaven of deceit in my speech. My relative was not behaving like the traditional uncle in a comedy (who probably derives some of his characteristics from Sir Anthony Absolute), and insisting on my summarily uniting myself to a lady of his choice for the gratification of his whim. The fact was that I had at last screwed up my courage, and ventured to tell him of my attachment to Alice, of which he strongly disapproved; but as there happened to be a certain young woman of large wealth and considerable unattractiveness, about whom Alice did me the honour of

exhibiting much jealousy, and as such portions of the letter as I had read to her admitted of arbitrary interpretation, I made up my own story—for, of course, I was anxious to avoid hurting poor little Alice's feelings by confessing that my uncle objected to her. It was very hard to take it all coolly, for his displeasure meant the withdrawal of the liberal income he had hitherto allowed me; but I could not show that before Alice.

'As for me, I can't change, you know,' she said; 'but I will never consent to be a cause of quarrel between you and the uncle who has been so kind to you. It shall not be through me that you—now, don't, Bertie! I want—don't! I want to talk sense.'

'You shouldn't attempt impossibilities, little girl; and listen to me. I read you extracts from the letters partly because you made me do so, and partly because I wanted you to know how matters stand. You see that you are not the bone of contention between my uncle and myself—it's a much more osseous subject than you, dear. Of course it is a nuisance, a great nuisance; but not great enough to make us despond; and though I have no definite plans at present, I shall soon see my way.'

'And don't you think, Bertie, that I ought to accept Betterton's engagement?' she asked.

'I hoped that you had done with singing for ever, and hate the idea of your resuming the profession—especially on the stage. You'll travel about I don't know where, and I shall never see you,' I selfishly added.

'I think I had better take the offer, dear, for if I'm not busy I shall mope; and there's nothing doing in the way of concerts—nothing at all. Besides it's worth having, you know, twelve guineas a week and travelling expenses.'

'I don't like consenting—however, do as you think best. It won't be for long, I hope. Betterton doesn't want an active and intelligent young man in the scene-shifting line, I suppose?' said I, trying to raise the feeblest of jokes. 'Don't you think I should look well in a paper cap?'

'Would you sing, Bertie?' she said, eagerly. 'But no, that wouldn't do.'

'I don't expect it would, little girl. Betterton seems a very good sort of fellow, and I should be happy to afford him any gratification; but I don't think my rendering of "In cielo benedetto," from the "Lombardi," for instance, would have the effect of transporting him to the place in question.'

'Be serious, Bertie,' she said, with a flutter of excitement in her voice and fingers as she searched through a little pile of letters on the table. 'Who does sing "In cielo" in tune? See what Betterton writes,' and she handed me his letter, and pointed to a passage which I read:

'I shall be in town on Tuesday, and will call about three to give you any information you may require in the event of your accepting; and to try and find a tenor. Northblossom asks (and deserves) more than I can give. Do you know one whose terms are not very high?'

'You don't mean to say that you think he would have me?' I asked.

'I do indeed, Bertie dear—I'm nearly sure that you would suit him, and you know a great deal

of the tenor parts—but of course you wouldn't accept?'

'I wouldn't what?' I cried, frightened out of propriety of language at the idea. 'Why it is the very thing in the world that I should like best.'

Throughout a life idle in every other particular, I had enthusiastically indulged my love of music, and studied diligently, little dreaming that one day my industry would be turned to account; so I seized the notion with delight, and we filled up the time till Betterton arrived by building castles in the air of the most magnificent proportions and superb architectural detail.

My heart echoed his knock at the door, as he arrived at the appointed hour. He seemed pleased with Alice's acceptance; receiving the announcement of my candidature with equanimity.

'Sung a good deal as an amateur? No, thanks; I don't care much for newspaper criticisms,' he said, in answer to an offer which I made of showing him some. 'I'd rather hear you, if you will kindly sing something for me. May I look through your music, Miss Rawnsley?'

He selected 'Agnès, ma jouvencelle,' from 'Fra Diavolo,' which I said I knew; and seating himself at the piano, commenced, with perfection of touch, to play the symphony; and then for the first time I realised the position, and, trying to draw a deep breath, found that there was none to draw. His deft fingers pressed the keys, and I saw that in two bars—in a bar and a half—in one bar, I must commence. I have no idea how I did so, but suddenly I heard the sound of my own voice; and, hearing it, a little confidence came to my aid. It was not a very difficult song. I feared only one passage; and as Better-

ton turned the page I saw the little ambush of black notes thickly clustering together, with a big white open one at the top of all, which seemed to be lying in wait to entrap me. As I came to them Alice laid her hand on my arm, and, summoning up all my strength, I attacked my enemies. The little ones fell easily before me, and then with a fresh breath I engaged the big one, and victoriously overcame him, he offering no resistance, for I held him aloft, and he was quite steady, and easy to manage; though a full, strong, able-bodied note for all that.

I don't think any grunt was ever so difficult of interpretation as Betterton's when he struck the last chord. Whether it meant utter contempt or lively appreciation I could form no idea; but there was a smile on Alice's face which led me to hope that I had not failed; and I was comforted.

'Faust' was open on the piano, and the manager carelessly turned the leaves.

'You know this, I suppose?' he said, as he came to the duet in the garden scene. 'Do you mind trying it with Mr. Heytesmere, Miss Rawnsley?'

We sang the recitative; and I commenced

'Dammi ancor, dammi ancor
Contemplar il tuo viso,'

the perfectly beautiful air which follows. Then Alice's voice rang out sweet and clear:

'O silenzio, O mister,
Ineffabil mistero;'

and then we joined, both of us, loving the music, singing with heart and soul.

Betterton ran his fingers up the key-board when we had finished, and for a moment I feared that he was dissatisfied; but it was not so.

'Thank you, Mr. Heytesmere. Yes, I am happy to offer you the

engagement,' he said; and proceeded to arrange terms, &c. We were to join him at Maversford in three weeks' time; leaving us a week in which to settle the wedding, and a sufficient balance to admit of our spending two quarters of the honeymoon. I inwardly blessed him as he made his *adieu*, and soon retired myself; for, under the circumstances, I thought it probable that Alice would like to go upstairs and cry; and I wished to be alone also, and realise the rapid changes which the last few hours had brought about.

It would have been a great convenience to me if my uncle had seen fit to postpone his indignation until after quarter-day. Perhaps it did not occur to him; or perhaps he thought that I should prove exceptionally amenable to reason about the 20th of March: for though a ten-pound note and change for a sovereign are very good things in their way, they hardly constitute sufficient ballast wherewith to embark on the voyage of matrimony. I was turning this over in my mind when I reached my rooms, and found Charlie Mather reclining in an easy-chair, studying the sporting intelligence in a morning paper.

If Charlie's intellect had been in proportion to his goodness of heart, Shakespeare and he might have tossed up for first place: if his goodness of heart had been in proportion to his intellect—but it is needless to pursue this consideration, for there would have been hardly enough goodness to mention.

'Readin' the paper, old fellow,' he said, after the usual greetings. '"Top-knot cantered in an easy winner by five lengths. The others close up, except Amaryllis, who trotted in with the crowd."

That's my mare—ran at Epsom yesterday.'

'Very sociable animal,' I suggested; 'fond of society.'

'P'raps that's it,' he answered. 'It's bad weather for horses, Daycott says—and for men, too, I think, when they have to pay such trainin' bills for nothin'. Corydon's runnin' to-morrow at Windsor. Will you come down?'

'I'm afraid I can't, thank you, Charlie. The fact is, I am going to be married on Tuesday, and my wife and I play in the opera of "Maritana" at Maverford on the 17th of next month,' I replied.

His astonishment was of the very blankest description when I had convinced him of my seriousness; and he sank farther and farther back in his seat as I told him of the change in my fortune.

'Beastly fellow, that uncle—at least, I beg your pardon—but—I prayed him not to apologise. Isn't there any chance of his comin' round?'

'Not round to my view of the subject; at least, when he does come to it he doesn't like it. He's very determined, and won't change,' I answered.

'Goin' to be married, and goin' to sing at the opera!' Charlie exclaimed, slowly. 'By Jove! you'll have to know an awful lot of tunes; shan't you? It's rather quick work, though, isn't it? I thought it took a long time to pull these things off.'

'In an ordinary way, the slaughter and preparation of the oxen and fatlings are rather protracted ceremonies, I believe; but we shall do without much beef and veal. Imprudent pair of song-birds, you think, setting up without a nest to go to? The material to help and line one would have come on quarter-day, under ordinary circumstances.'

'But you must have a nest,'

and,' he continued, plunging into metaphor for perhaps the first time in his life, 'furniture in it, too, like other birds!'

'More than most birds, my good Charlie. We must have a piano; and they sing without accompaniment,' I answered.

'That's chaff; but, seriously, you'll want money. You'll have to buy spangles and things, shan't you? And you know, Heytesmere, how very glad I shall be if I can do anything to help you and the girl; and you can pay me when you are *primo tenore*—don't they call it?—at Covent Garden; or when you've found out about Peter's grandfather, and come into all that money.'

I must interpret Charlie's allusion. My grand-uncle, Clement Heytesmere, was a lawyer, and had made the discovery that when society reached that interesting stage at which every one had his rights, we should have the Heytesmere property. We had not got it, nor had it been ours for generations; and though I do not know how many points the law has, possession is nine of them; and the law must be a regular porcupine if it leaves the unfortunate non-possessor enough to do him much good. My grandfather, Colonel Heytesmere, was the eldest brother, and took the matter up at first; but he could not prove where Peter was born, nor where Michael was buried; and, most important of all, where Percy and Anne were married; indeed, he was forced to conclude that if they had been through the ceremony at all, it must have taken place in some inaccessible backwood of America—they were traced to the other hemisphere. Clement would not give up: wanted to quarrel with his brother for his lack of enthusiasm, and continued the quest alone;

except inasmuch as my grandfather supplied him with money when Clement said it was necessary to success. It was supposed that he had found the chief links; and, casually, my grandfather came across a few important facts; but, when Clement died, as he did very suddenly at Southampton, the old villain left no papers but an unpaid bill for wines and spirits and one useless certificate. Since then the search had been abandoned.

I was rather too doubtful as to the arrival of either period of repayment which Mather suggested to accept the cheque he tried to force upon me; but I took one for a smaller amount, and extracted from him his consent to give Alice away, if by a legal fiction she might be supposed to belong to him temporarily.

She and I appeared at the church on Tuesday morning, and were met by a very mild young curate, a very snuffy old pew-opener, and Mather, nervous and confused in the highest degree; but by their joint aid we were united with a security to which the whole bench of bishops could have added nothing; and then we started for our short tour.

It was not by any means a holiday, for I was obliged to perfect my knowledge as much as possible of the lyrical and dramatic joys and sorrows of *Don César de Bazan*, *Manrico*, *Elvino*, *Edgardo*, and various other persons who sometimes resorted to extremely complicated methods of expressing their feelings. The two weeks passed like two days; and then we ruefully said 'Good-bye' to pleasant little Beachley, and journeyed on to Maverford. Bertie Heytesmere was no more; Alice Rawnsley had ceased to exist; but a Miss Alison and a Mr. Heywood, who alighted at

the Maverford Station, and were there received by Mr. Betterton, bore a striking resemblance to the 'young couple' who had been staying at Beachley.

I must not plunge into anecdotes of my stage life, with all its novelty and excitement; for if I once begin, there will be no stopping. It was very strange, at first, to retire into a little room at the back of the stage each evening, dressed in a shooting jacket, and to emerge anon in unaccustomed trunks and tights, face 'made up' with red and white, and mysterious hair *crêpé*, or 'crape hair' as it is generally called in the profession. Wigs were puzzling, too, at first; and having carefully tucked up the betraying natural crop, a terrible feeling would steal over me towards the middle of the first act that some slight exertion on the stage had disarranged the whole affair, and that from beneath the meretricious adornment of light hair, the natural dark was becoming more and more visible, and forming an absurd contrast to the lightened eyebrows. But all this soon passed away.

We played 'Maritana,' 'Faust,' 'Trovatore,' 'Lucia,' 'Lurline,' 'Sonnambula,' and the perennial 'Bohemian Girl': the fact that my wife had been a singer in some measure removing the brand of the amateur beast—so hateful to the profession—from my forehead. It was hard work, very hard; for there is a mighty difference between learning to sing a ballad with what you imagine to be taste and feeling, and joining in tune and time in the recitatives and concerted music throughout a long opera. A notion obtains amongst amateurs—you see, I speak from the other side of the stream now—that if one can sing a ballad 'properly,'

the said one can sing anything. There is a similar idea with regard to cooks ; that if a man can cook a chop satisfactorily, he is capable of any culinary effort. Distrust each axiom. Ask the accomplished vocalist to sing ‘*Salve, dimora,*’ and the finished *chef* to dress you something special in the way of a *salmi*. *Vous verrez.*

To return to the opera, however. Though it was, as I have said, hard work, it was a very happy life. An old motherly contralto took a great fancy to little Alice, and was very kind to her (poor Marta ! gone now for ever beyond the reach of Mephistophelian temptation, did any one, in any nation or language, ever play the part of Margherita’s unwary guardian as perfectly as you!). I got on admirably with Betterton, who was a most amusing companion when duty was over, and had seen musical service in every part of the world ; from improvised concerts amongst the huts of Australian gold-diggers to performances of music from a royal pen at a royal castle. With the company I may venture to say that I was not unpopular, when the first flush of rawness had worn away ; and the local papers were kind enough to say civil things. Those country papers ! How contemptuous we are of their opinions when they don’t nearly interest us. How utterly we despise their ignorance when they cut us up. But if it so be that on looking down their columns we find a favourable criticism on something we have done, how rapidly we correct our notions as to their merits, and value the far-seeing wisdom of their remarks !

My wife’s success was great, for she sang very charmingly, and acted with a natural talent and intelligence which to a great

extent compensated for her lack of stage experience. But away from the theatre she was the veriest child—more fit to trundle a hoop round the town than to wear a symbolical golden one on her finger. Fate was propitious, or I don’t know where we should have landed ; for if the two ends had shown any disinclination to meeting, we were utterly incapable of inducing them to do so.

Our choice of residence at 15, Cliffe Road was not fortunate. Mrs. Rипps, the landlady, kept a stationer’s shop in the High Street, and was chiefly remarkable for the fact that the editor of the ‘Times’ and most of the leading publishers had conspired together to effect her ruin, by deliberately refusing to supply her with the various papers and magazines which she punctually ordered ; for what reason she was quite unable to say, as she was not conscious of ever having done any of them an injury. Mrs. Rипps did not show the light of her countenance much at Cliffe Street, leaving us to the tender mercies of Lizer, a young person who, if wanting as an attendant—a fact which, I think, her most faithful friends would not dispute—was even more dismally a failure looked at in the light of a cook. In spite of all this we enjoyed Maverford, and were sorry when our stay was drawing to a close. I had waited in vain for a letter from the uncle, but one day we received one from Charlie Mather. He was going south, and as he had to pass through the town, and was very anxious to see us, proposed remaining at Maverford for a day or two, if I would take some rooms for him at the hotel.

‘Are you a sufficiently experienced matron to entertain a visitor?’ I asked Alice. ‘Charlie

Mather is coming to Maverford for a day or two, and of course he must stay with us.'

Alice looked pleased; but serious withal. 'I don't know, I'm sure, dear,' she replied; 'I'm afraid Mr. Mather would not like Eliza's cooking.' And, indeed, the extraordinary variety of methods in which that damsel contrived to spoil our dinner, though curious from a numerical point of view, was a trifle disheartening to hungry people, and I could not but reply that Alice's fear had a foundation.

'She is a little tiresome sometimes, certainly. Do you think,' she continued, with a due sense of the gravity of her proposition, 'that if I were to try and cook things I could do them right? Don't laugh, dear; don't you think I could?'

'No, you baby, I don't think there is the slightest possibility of your being even remotely successful,' was my annihilating reply. 'However, we'll manage all that. Let's see, he arrives at half-past two; we can go and meet him as we come from rehearsal.'

She consented to accompany me to the station, where Charlie's good-humoured face was one of the first we saw.

Our guest was immensely delighted with Maverford and everything there—though, for the matter of that, I never saw him in any combination of circumstances under which he was not perfectly satisfied and happy. Of course he went to the opera the first evening; and it was decided that next day we should take him for a drive to see the neighbourhood, going by the London road to enable Alice to visit her latest *protégées*. But events were ordered otherwise. Instead of repeating the familiar 'Rose of Castile,' Betterton decided on playing the

'Lily of Killarney,' and we were obliged to attend rehearsal; and indeed, apart from the music, I should not have liked Alice to go through the water-cave business without seeing that it worked well. I don't think that such scenes should be introduced into opera at all; if the music is not sufficient attraction, better give up the whole thing: however, the 'Lily' is far too beautiful to be lost, and so will continue to be played in spite of objections to the plot. You see, a nervous girl becomes quite unstrung by knowing that all that acrobatic business is coming, and the reaction and excitement prevent her singing up to herself when it is over.

Alice was disappointed; but Charlie, gathering the gist of her regrets, of course expressed his determination of riding round to have a look at the place by himself; and he could leave the money.

Rehearsal went off smoothly; and when we returned to the house we found Charlie already there. He announced the fulfilment of his errand.

'Didn't you say you had never been to that cottage, Mrs. Heytesmere?' he continued. 'You haven't seen the people, have you, Bertie?'

Neither Alice nor I had been near the place.

'Then how is it that I found this there?' he asked, drawing a scrap of paper from his pocket. It was a wrapper in which something had been sent through the post; and I took it and read:

'CLEMENT H. F. HEYTESMERE, Esq.,
' 109, Riverside,
' Maverford.'

'Uncle Clement, by all that's marvellous!' I exclaimed, '"109 Riverside," why, that's a sort of provision-shop, isn't it? How could it have got there? It was he,

you know, who took such trouble about the Hall property.'

Charlie had been keeping in his excitement; but the small spark which I had emitted set it in a blaze.

I thought it was very strange, and so I asked about it, and the people at the cottage said it had been used to wrap up some things they bought there. But, look here, Bertie, don't you go gettin' sanguine and all that sort of thing, and then bein' disappointed, you know,' was Charlie's caution; he palpably thinking all the while that this discovery must bring about the most important results in the course of the next ten minutes. Alice did not exactly follow the matter, for I had not talked much about it to her, not wishing to raise hopes which might never be realised; and she looked on with wonder, as I seized my hat, and rushed off to 109, Riverside.

It was as I had expected to find, a small grocer's shop.

'Is your master in?' I asked the shopman, who greeted me with a bumpkin grin of resignation, and was about to reply when the proprietor emerged from his little den at the back.

'What can I do for you, sir?—Mr. Heywood, I believe?' he said.

'That is my professional name. My own name is Heytesmere; and something which you sent from your shop yesterday has that name upon it, with initials the same as those of an uncle of mine who died some years ago. If you have any papers connected with him, they may prove of the highest value to me.'

'There's a cupboard-full upstairs, and —'

'I'll give you what price you like for them,' I burst in.

'No, sir; if you are one of the family, they rightly belong to you

—though it's a great wonder that they was kept. Mr. Clement Heytesmere lodged here in my father's time, and a very strange old gentleman he was, as I well remember, though I was but a lad then: not quite right in his head they did say—begging your pardon, sir. He came down here, and said that he thought he had found a mine in the neighbourhood—though, as you know, sir, there are no mines anywhere near Maverton; and this was his head-quarters, on and off, for about a year. He'd go away for a fortnight and three weeks at a time, and then come back and sit day and night poring over old law-papers; but one day he left—ah, nigh upon forty years ago—and he didn't come back again, and never's been heard of since, that I know of. I'm not aware how the paper you have in your hand found its way down here; but there's a lot more upstairs, and I hope they'll be useful to you.' Thus the shopkeeper; and I escorted a barrowfull of Uncle Clement's documents back to Cliffe Street.

'Look here, Bertie, you just write—or I'll write for you—to my old lawyer, Lawson, of Gray's Inn. He'll pull you through, if any one can,' said Charlie, vaguely gazing at the heap of parchments and papers, which I was vainly endeavouring to reduce to some sort of order. I could make nothing of them, however, though I tried until it was more than time to go to the theatre, where I was just able to dress and get on the stage to my cue; but I fancy there was a friskiness about *Elvino's* demeanour, and a jauntiness about the manner in which he took his troubles at the end of the second act, that Bellini hardly contemplated.

Lawson arrived next day. A little shrivelled-up old gentleman,

wearing a white neck-cloth, and raiment in the style of the last generation, who knew every one and everything about him. He set to work, and amongst the papers found a pedigree which Uncle Clement had drawn up, showing the discoveries he had made—what his mine had yielded—and the few things which were still wanting. Yes, Fate was propitious—it wasn't worth Fate's while to persecute such a harmless little creature as Alice—for amongst my grandfather's papers was a document of similar character to Clement's, and the two dovetailed in, fitting together the missing links and making all clear!

'Your way is straight, but there are obstacles in it,' Lawson explained. 'The property has fallen in to Lord Steyningforth, as you probably know—the most obstinate old man in the kingdom; and I greatly fear that he will stubbornly oppose us.'

'And that will delay matters for some time?' I said, rather ruefully; for this prospect had not occurred to me.

'Possibly for years,' Lawson exclaimed, making a polite little bow to the law which could so legally obstruct justice. 'I have, however, written to his lordship, and explained matters.'

We all waited very anxiously for a letter—you may guess I was not anxious to play a part in that long and uninteresting drama, a chancery suit: at length the letter came.

'Lord Steyningforth had always

been given to understand that the Heytesmeres were very estimable people' (an awfully vain old boy was his lordship); 'and as his lawyer found Mr. Lawson's statement perfectly correct, he should be delighted to assist.'

Thus with four lines about 5,000*l.* a year, and seven about a wretched little beast, worth half-a-sovereign, this dreaded personage cleared the course.

In the envelope was a paper covered by figures enwrapping a cheque.

'Very handsome of his lordship,' said Lawson, handing it to me.

It was a cheque for the arrears of rent which Steyningforth had received, and he had inclosed the calculations.

* * * * *

Betterton kindly insisted on giving my wife a benefit, and the emerald-and-diamond ring she always wears is the memorial of it: after a little while we settled down here.

Alice's favorite subject of discussion is, through whom was it all brought about?

I say through her; for if I had not married her I should never have gone to Maverford. She talks nonsense about the result of faithfulness on my part; but, after all, it was Charlie who made the essential discovery. All influences worked wonderfully together to help each other: and here we are at Heytesmere.

I think we have good reason to remember our engagement as Soprano and Tenor.

ALFRED E. T. WATSON.



SHERIDAN IN THE ASCENDANT.

The School for Scandal.

THAT a comedy ninety-seven years old, and which is more or less old-fashioned in style, sentiment, and treatment, should have become a stock piece at no less than three London houses, and have far exceeded its two-hundredth representation at one of those houses, is a fact of extraordinary significance. It is, perhaps, the most important dramatic event since the days of Macready; and it at least proves that the responsibility of the decay of the stage does not rest with the public. Such hearty relish of a good old play shows that a new one as good would meet as cordial a reception. The great PUBLIC, indeed, often vilified, but in the main always true and honest, is the best and most sagacious of critics. Though, like Charles Surface, Sheridan's hero, it may be led astray for a while, and 'sell its ancestors' for such vapid pleasures as burlesques and sensation plays, still, when the proper time comes, it shows judgment and affection, and refuses to 'part with its uncle's portrait' on any terms.

There is something almost mysterious in this popularity of an old play, which every one almost knows by heart, or has read, or at least is familiar with, as it were, indirectly, by hearing it described and quoted from. On the other hand, a modern piece seems to fade and fade with repetition, and, on revival, becomes as intolerable as a suit of clothes that is ten years old. It is, indeed, more with the characters of the 'School for Scandal,' than with the play, that we are familiar; for every one knows Sir Peter and his lady, the two Surfaces,

Sir Benjamin, and Mrs. Candour; while people who have never read or seen the piece would recognise these popular personages the first time they saw them on the boards. It would be expected that this ever-increasing familiarity might produce satiety. But this can be explained by what takes place in real life. The art of great play-writing lies in selection and abstraction—that is, in choosing and bringing together with probability characters and situations such as private individuals could rarely hope to encounter in real life. Every one in his course encounters bits of character and stray situations that are dramatic; and these furnish a strange interest. Some such interest is at the bottom of the contentment men of genius find in society. The great dramatist repairs this ill-fortune of the public, and supplies them with an artificial representation of what they could not see in real life. Again, a character that exhibits itself under various influences—that can be jealous, forgiving, passionate, and humorous, provided it be natural and spontaneous, would be in real life a source of never-flagging interest and entertainment: and it is for some such reason that the 'School for Scandal,' though familiar, will ever be fresh and new. The little progressive stages in particular scenes—the crescendos, as it were—are so piquant and tantalizing that, though the whole result is known beforehand, and what is coming can be anticipated, we are led on and on by the mere spectacle of mental details working themselves out. Thus it is not too much to say that the matchless Screen

scene may be witnessed again and again, and again, with a perpetual sense of novelty—the situation takes hold of us so artfully, and is worked up with so many surprises, which are all at the same time perfectly in nature. There is really the same marvellous novelty that is found in the greater plays of Shakspeare. This is the more singular, as it is known that the last acts were dashed off, under pressure, as it were, and perilously near the very hour of performance. Turning back to the newspaper criticisms which appeared the day after the first performance, it is plain that the extraordinary effect of the screen scene quite carried away the spectators, and that, in its overwhelming brilliancy, all faults were overlooked. Yet it is admitted that there are many excrescences—many portions which seem to move very slowly. Compared with the brisker and more vivacious portions, such as the whole screen scene, the picture auction, the quarrel between Sir Peter and his lady; and the application for assistance made to Joseph by his uncle, the two important scenes where the 'Scandalous College' exhibits are rather artificial, and too detailed, and the author has been unable to restrain the flow of elaborate conceits which his wit suggested; while the love episode of Maria and Charles is as solemn as that of Falkland and Julia in the 'Rivals.' Indeed, the bits of scandalous wit in which the characters indulge, if tested by the canons of social probability, have an unreal air, which is unfortunately heightened by the realism of modern acting, which aims at giving as much force and emphasis as possible to every sentence that contains 'a point.' It would be impossible to imagine a scandalous old gossip over a cup

of tea at five o'clock criticising the features of a friend by likening them to a repaired antique bust, where the head belongs to one age, &c., and where the only portions 'likely to join to issue' are the nose and chin. Such an elaborate conceit as this worked out minutely would only excite a stare of surprise; and it would be assumed that it had been got by heart out of a book. The only terms on which such an elaborate metaphor could be received would be that it came spontaneously, and was delivered with extraordinary lightness and gaiety. This 'gaiety' was the charm of the old actors; and soon we may hope that our modern players will recover it. Such speeches should be delivered with an airy and flowing manner, as though the several stages were only then suggesting themselves. There should be an easy carelessness, an unstudied tone, a delicious sense of enjoyment.

Every playgoer will, no doubt, have found the last act 'drag' a little. The bringing in of Snake, with his revelations, seems to belong to melodrama; but this was an attempt to tack on the Scandalous College to the main story. The reconciliation, too, of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle seems abrupt after that very damaging *exposé*: for the gay tone of the comedy is so delightful that few have time to reflect that the lady seemed on the verge of yielding to her admirer when the servant so awkwardly entered. This stage of the business was, it may be presumed, never revealed to the trusting old gentleman. On the other hand, allowance must be made for the tone and habits of the day, when a sprightly lady might pay such a visit to a gentleman, thus hovering on the verge of an intrigue.

And here a remark may be

made about certain pieces of 'business' in this comedy said to be inherited from the original performers. One notable instance is where the scandal-mongers are taking leave of Sir Peter, with an affectionate condolence on his misfortune. This is done by each performer coming forward in turn, taking each other's place, and finally uttering a sort of chorus of condolence arm in arm. The effect is utterly absurd, unnatural, and false to nature. In the instance of these sacred pieces of 'business' it is forgotten that they arose from a certain spontaneousness on the part of the original actors, and that they were accompanied by a natural inspiration. Thus the successiveness of these condolences would have suggested a successiveness of position. But in process of time the inspiration with other attendant circumstances are forgotten, and there remains only the dry form, which, however accurately reproduced, becomes mere pantomime. Thus where Joseph is condoling with Sir Peter, each turns away and has a handkerchief to his face; and the regular 'business' is that a hand of each should feel for the other, and give a feeling squeeze. This, too, has become a sort of drill-sergeant motion—very unnatural to look at. There is one absurd gag, which forces its universal acceptance in every company, viz., the addition of the 'postage unpaid for that double letter,' delivered by the postman who was struck by the bullet. This execrable piece of taste actually spoils the effect of the 'circumstantiality' of the previous portion. Another disagreeable piece of 'business' which is never omitted is the sound, like the note of a corncrake, which Sir Peter utters three times, as he points to the screen when

he tells Charles of the concealed milliner, and which is repeated also three times by Charles. And it must be said that the humour of Mr. Webster at this crisis was admirable, and his suppressed enjoyment and glances at the screen, with 'Yes, I will tell him,' excellent. Again, how infinitely humorous is the situation, how deliciously and artfully complicated the elements of genuine fun! There is here, too, a passage which is invariably overdone to an extravagant degree, namely, Charles's laughter and enjoyment of the situation before he goes out. This is always made to take the shape of offensive jeering, accompanied by an extravagant and unnatural hilarity. Now, the situation is really a painful one, and the intention of the author was merely that Charles, from his high spirits, should be unable to resist a thrust at his hypocritical brother, or a little reminder to Sir Peter. But no gentleman would remain for three or four minutes ridiculing an old gentleman, pointing and scoffing at him in the most outrageous fashion. But this is too favourite a situation to be given up, and the actor so invariably elaborates it, that he is generally called out from the wing, to receive the compliments of the audience.

Connected with this piece are all sorts of traditions and stories. One of the most grotesque is the idea of the stiff, solemn Kemble undertaking the airy Charles Surface, a sacrifice which the public called 'Charles's martyrdom.' And yet Lamb relished the performance; but on the ground that 'the points' of the dialogue were brought out by his declamatory manner 'with the utmost precision.' This, on the face of it, must have been one of Elia's fantastic idiosyncracies. Palmer

had so thoroughly identified himself with the part of Joseph, that he imported his earnest hypocrisy into real life; and when commencing an elaborate justification of himself to Sheridan, after a quarrel, was stopped by the author with 'My dear Jack, you forget that I wrote the part.'

It is well known that the first cast of the great comedy was nearly perfect, and that every succeeding one has been inferior and yet inferior. Nearly all the actors were of the Drury Lane 'old guard,' and had been led to victory for many years under Garrick's captainship; most of them, too, were remarkable personages. King, the Sir Peter, had been the original Lord Ogleby, a character which took the town by storm. As a man of *ton*, he had opportunities of mingling with men of fashion, and these opportunities he turned to profit; 'as an actor he represented the characters with a reference to *human nature*, with which he was well acquainted, and he never copied his predecessors, as many actors, both tragic and comic, have often done.' Mrs. Abington, the first Lady Teazle, was a woman of wit and vivacity—the friend of people of rank as well as of the sage Johnson, the admired of Reynolds, who has left some noble pictures of her, accomplished in foreign languages. Such a privileged being would bring other gifts to the character besides mere histrionic ones. Palmer—'Jack Palmer'—was the perfection of gentility, as we shall see later, the airiest in manner, whose theatrical reputation was founded on this Congreve-like gaiety, which people went to the theatre to be entertained with; while his private character was said to correspond a good deal to that of the part allotted to

him, Joseph Surface. Smith, 'the genteel, the airy, and the smart,' was reared at Eton, the friend of Sir George Beaumont and men of rank, his old schoolfellows; fond of Newmarket and racing, and accustomed to boast that he had never degraded himself by going down a trap or blacking his face. Surely here was the very man for Charles Surface. It is enough to mention Miss Pope, who played Mrs. Candour, to call up Churchill's tripping lines; and, indeed, the merits of this gifted creature have drawn forth such graphic and vivid portraits from poets, critics, and painters, that even we of this generation have an excellent idea of her. Dodd and Parsons, the Crabtree and Backbite, played these comparatively minor characters to perfection. Now, even from this meagre description, the reader will gather that there was more than a mere group of actors cast for a new comedy. Such a bringing together of natural gifts and character would by itself tell on any performance that was attempted. No wonder, therefore, that Elia should declare that 'it is impossible that it should be now acted, though it continues at long intervals to be announced in the bills.' 'Sir Peter Teazle,' he says, 'must be no longer the comic idea of a fretful old bachelor bridegroom, whose teasings (while King acted it) were evidently as much played off at you, as they were meant to concern anybody on the stage. He must be a real person, capable in law of sustaining an injury, a person towards whom duties are to be acknowledged—the genuine crim. con. antagonist of the villainous seducer, Joseph. To realise him more, his sufferings under his unfortunate match must have the downright pungency of life, must (or should) make you, not mirthful, but

THE SCREEN SCENE FROM "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

uncomfortable, just as the same predicament would move you in a neighbour or an old friend; the delicious scenes which give the play its name and zest must affect you in the same serious manner as if you heard the reputation of a dear female friend attacked in your real presence. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin, those poor snakes that live but in the sunshine of your mirth, must be ripened by this hot-bed process of realisation into asps or amphisbaenas, and Mrs. Candour—oh! frightful!—become a hooded serpent. Oh! who that remembers Parsons and Dodd, the wasp and butterfly of the "School for Scandal," in those two characters, and charming, natural Miss Pope, the perfect gentlewoman as distinguished from the fine lady of comedy, in this latter part, would forego the true scenic delight, the escape from life, the oblivion of consequences, the holiday barring-out of the pedant Reflection, those saturnalia of two or three brief hours well won from the world, to sit instead at one of our modern plays, to have his coward conscience (that forsooth must not be left for a moment) stimulated with perpetual appeals—dulled rather, and blunted, as a faculty without repose, must be—and his moral vanity pampered with images of national justice, national beneficence, lives saved without the spectators' risk, and fortunes given away that cost the author nothing?

This downright realism Lamb would have found in the current performances of the play, as presented in our time. The piece becomes a melodrama, lightened with comic scenes. Joseph Surface expostulates with Lady Teazle as to the plethoric character of her reputation; and the necessity of some trifling 'trip' is urged with all the gravity of logical argument, to be gravely contested in

return by the lady. Whereas, in truth, it was meant for a sort of crafty badinage—an insinuation, which, if taken seriously and with indignation, might be disclaimed as a jest; but if accepted at all, might be used as a basis for something more direct. Mr. Surface was in truth, a gay and seductive man, with powers of attraction, elegant in his manners, and winning in his ways, and, to average observers, genuine in his sentiments. This view excludes all 'canting,' rolling or upturning of eyes; while 'sentiments,' such as 'the man who,' &c., should be delivered modestly and unaffectedly, with a certain earnestness.

It is easy, however, to laud the old ideals; and it is certainly unreasonable to require such matchless excellence in our own day. The air has lately been filled with jeremiads over the 'decay of the stage,' which were justifiable enough: but it would be unjust to deny that within the last three or four years there has been an incredible advance both in the public taste and the style of acting. And it may be added that these complaints, which were sometimes found wearisome, and perhaps ungracious, may have helped in the reform. Some actors have advanced so rapidly, and have developed such powers, through the simple agency of being furnished with dramatic characters, that they are hardly to be recognized as the same persons. And this is especially noticeable in the case of the Vaudeville company, who, if they could get rid of the disturbing but flattering influences of burlesque, would present a comedy in the attractive and satisfactory shape.

It must be said, however, that a comedy like the 'School for Scandal' is put on the stage at such a theatre under certain disadvantages, for which the com-

pany are not accountable. This is owing to the small size of the stage; comedy requiring a fine expanse, a grand spaciousness, a distance from the spectator's eye almost in proportion to that metaphorical distance which should be between the realm of comedy and real life: though the aim of all modern art would seem to be to copy real life, and not nature, which is confounded with real life. The stately dresses, wigs, &c., demand spacious and pretentious rooms. There must be space for the trains to sweep along, as their wearers curtsey and troop magnificently past. There is a certain ceremonious mode of entrance and exit in keeping with such costume—small, 'squeezed' chambers, furniture contracted and huddled, are altogether out of harmony. There is even a certain stately walk, an exaggerated style of gesture and speech, that befits such dress. But this is being hypercritical. The piece is, on the whole, excellently acted; and we come away with a feeling which seems to be a fair test of the acting, viz., a respect for the actors, with an increased interest in them. Their images come back on the next day, inseparable from the characters: we think of them again and again and admire them.

Joseph Surface is the character on which the eye rests; and a most difficult one it is, if played as Lamb would have it played. It has fallen into the hands of Mr. Clayton, an actor who has shown remarkable gifts, especially in elaborately working up characters which leave an impression. Few actors know how to go about this process, or are willing to endure the strain and labour necessary—for it entails much painful study, and a sort of 'living' in the character, until inspiration comes, which prompts

every motion. Nothing more singular or grotesque could have been conceived than his 'Jaggers,' which might have satisfied Mr. Dickens—always *difficile* where his own work was concerned. His Joseph Surface stands out with similar force—a picturesque figure, too,* with the wig and rich plum-coloured coat. The whole had the true 'gaiety,' though, perhaps, in the great scene with Lady Teazle the advances were too much in earnest to have been approved of by Charles Lamb. This, however, amounts to no more than a different reading. The highest praise, too, can be given to his scene with the poor relation, where the genuine heartlessness is made to pierce through the varnish of his insinuating manner. As this great comedy was but a short time ago being performed by no less than three companies—the Haymarket, Vaudeville, and Princess's—it is impossible to avoid making some comparisons, however 'oderous' they may be found. The three Josephs were Mr. Howe, Mr. Clayton, and Mr. Fernandez, the latter an excellent actor of melodrama. His monk in 'Notre Dame' was picturesque; but such a performer, as may be well conceived, was wholly unsuited to elegant comedy, and criticism would be unfair. Mr. Howe is a sterling and admirable actor, with a gravity and faith in what he is saying which is welcome in comedy, which belongs to the old school, and which, it must be said, is chiefly found at the Haymarket, about whose walls linger some of the older traditions.

* Indeed the cabinet photograph by Messrs. Window and Grove of the artist in this part is worthy a place in any collection of theatrical portraits. The face is a triumph of expression, conveying a slyness, mingled with a happy self-complacency.

He himself will perhaps recall, during his last performance at Dublin, when, after the discovery in the screen scene, he advanced to justify himself with 'Notwithstanding all that has passed, Sir Peter,' the roar of laughter that burst forth—homage to the sincerity of the acting. He had also in his scenes with Lady Teazle a great share of oily insinuation. Between him and Mr. Clayton's performance we shall not attempt to decide; both were excellent, though the latter 'took the eye,' as Lamb says of Palmer, 'with a greater airiness of person.' Miss Robertson's Lady Teazle was the best, though all three representatives—Miss Furtado, Miss Fawsitt, and Miss Robertson—lack the theatrical weight necessary. The part requires an actress with the gifts of a Mrs. Sterling. Miss Robertson, always graceful and elegant, belongs to quite another department; the lively married lady of old comedy needs an Abington or a Farren. Sir Peter fell to Mr. Webster, Mr. Farren, and Mr. Chippendale—names that at once command respect and admiration. Mr. Farren holds the traditions received directly from his father, who stepped into the place of King, the original Teazle. His reading rather differs from the conventional 'old man' pattern which has grown into favour. It must be remembered that Teazle was a hale, fresh gentleman, whose age is mentioned as being fifty, and Mr. Farren carries out this idea. There is a little 'aridity' which suggests stiffness. It must be confessed that this juvenile idea detracts from the dramatic interest, for half our sympathy and interest is owing to the unfair treatment of a gallant old gentleman. Mr. Webster is full of unction and at his best in the screen scene, his

chuckling over Joseph's situation being racy to a degree, and a capital specimen of senile enjoyment. But this admirable actor it were vain to praise, for there is colour and solidity in all he does. As for Mr. Chippendale, he is the best 'testy old man' of his day; that admirable gnarled face, the choleric expression, the very way in which the oldfashioned coat sits upon his shoulders, the husky voice, all is admirable. We almost prefer his Sir Antony to his Sir Peter. There is no more finished, more thorough, more entertaining actor on the stage than this valued member of the Haymarket corps; he has the true histrionic face. His excellent wife made infinitely more of Mrs. Candour than Miss Oliver did, who dealt with the part in a strangely artificial style, imparting to her voice a curious 'singing' tone, which took away the genuineness of the character. Mrs. Chippendale, though a little boisterous, gave a hearty vigour to her scandalous gossip, which was dealt out with a downright raciness befitting the subject. Mr. Kendall's Charles Surface was gentlemanly and refined, though it might have been freer; Mr. Cowper's more staid and elaborate; while Mr. Neville had a certain robustness and spirit which was in keeping. It is always pleasant to see Mr. James in a comedy part, and he is generally contented with one of the most modest dimensions, which he yet elaborates with all the pains in the world.

Thus much for this admirable comedy. What with the 'Rivals' at the Charing Cross and the 'School for Scandal' at two other theatres, Sheridan's two plays will have been performed nearly five hundred times within a single year! Sheridan is certainly in the ascendant.

THE BOAT RACE AND THE SPORTS.

THE effects of athletics and training have been of late so fully discussed, both from the medical and moral points of view, that little remains to be said about them, and it is gratifying to see that in spite of the severe criticism that muscular Christianity has received, the interest taken in such contests as the boat race is ever increasing. A popular novelist has vainly tried to make us believe that running and rowing tend to brutalise the moral qualities of their professors; and Dr. Morgan has met the charge that the severe training necessary to row in the boat race must be prejudicial to health, by the simplest possible refutation—the testimony of the old oarsmen themselves. In spite of Mr. Skey, they protest that they are in good health and strength, and decline to believe that they have by training laid the seeds of fatal disease. Prominent athletes at the universities generally take good degrees, as might be expected; for, to become a good oar or a good runner generally indicates the possession of quite as much intelligence as the average of our kind are gifted with.

"A very few years ago, the whole number of spectators at the University boat race was only equal, perhaps, to the crowd that thronged Hammersmith Bridge on the last 29th of March, and until 1867 ladies and gentlemen on horseback were in the habit of accompanying the boats for the greater part of the course without much inconvenience either to themselves or to spectators on foot; while now the whole river bank from Putney to Mortlake is thronged with such a dense mass of people that progression even on foot is a matter

requiring the exercise of much patience and good-nature. Of course only a very small proportion of those who go annually to see the race take an active interest in rowing, or understand anything about it; ladies go either for the picnic, or in obedience to the dictates of fashion; the rough has an object of his own, and engages with the greatest relish in the disgraceful crush and scrimmage which lasts for an hour or so at Hammersmith and Barnes, and the rowing man finds to his chagrin that he is able to catch but a passing glimpse of the most popular contest of the year. In fact the crowd becomes year by year more 'rowdy,' and we see in the near future a possible necessity of removing the locale of the race to some place not so easily accessible to the masses. Numerous accidents must happen, and do happen, but they seldom get into the daily papers. To the publicity given by the press to the training and practice of the crews we ascribe this excessive and inconvenient popularity, and it is to be hoped that the summer regattas will remain in their present agreeable obscurity, so far as the public at large is concerned.

The Cambridge crew made their appearance at Putney this year earlier than usual, having nearly three weeks' practice before the race, instead of the fortnight that they usually row on the Thames. Added to the prestige of last year's victory, they came up to town with the reputation of being a very strong lot of men, and already in good form and condition in spite of the numerous changes and the apparent difficulty of settling the crew before leaving Cambridge. However, their first row was by

no means satisfactory, the difference between the still water of the Cam and the lively tidal water at Putney puzzling the men at first, and having a bad effect upon their style; while the Oxford crew suffered less from this inconvenience, the water on which they practise being more lively than at Cambridge. Therefore the style of the Light Blues was criticised unfavourably when compared with that of their opponents (who arrived at Putney three days afterwards), although they had undeniable power, and made their boat travel fast through the water; which, after all, is the object of rowing. They had three of the winning crew of last year in their boat—Close, Robinson, and Read; and Oxford had four—Knollys, Nicholson, Mitchison, and Ornsby. Leslie, the Oxford stroke of last year, was unable to row, and Dowding had the highly-prized honour of taking his place; Rhodes, who rowed so splendidly at Henley Regatta, stroking the Cambridge boat. Mr. Chambers coached the latter, and Mr. Leslie the Dark Blues.

The tactics of the Cambridge coach were to practise his men at a long, swinging stroke of about 35 to the minute, and for this purpose the crew took steady rows of about two miles at a stretch, and made rapid improvement. Unfortunately, Hoskyns, their No. 2, met with an accident about a fortnight before the race; indeed it was said that he had been 'hugged by a bear,' and he was obliged to rest for a week. Next, Robinson, their No. 3, suffered so much from a severe cold that he was obliged to resign his seat in the boat, which was taken by Peabody, who had been rowing for Hoskyns, and was thus lucky enough to be one of the winning crew of 1873. These changes so late in training are always pre-

judicial to the chances of winning, and one result was that the crew were obliged to do more work in the last week than was good for them, and were rather overtrained on the day of the race. They rowed over the exact course only twice, on the 17th and 25th; and did the distance in 21 min. 15 sec. on the first occasion, and in 22 min. 47 sec. on the second.

The Oxford crew arrived at Putney on the 18th March, and their first row made a very favourable impression. They were a more evenly-sized lot of men than their opponents, and seemed to row in better time and swing, and to 'slide' better than the Cambridge crew; but there was a suspicious loss of pace noticeable at the end of each stroke, and the capabilities of one or two of them to row such a severe course were questioned by those wise in such matters. They did harder work in practice than their opponents, and their stroke was considerably quicker. They rowed over the whole course three times, on the 14th, 19th, and 22nd, and although their best time, 22 min. 40 sec., was slower than the best Cambridge time, their friends accounted for the difference by the less favourable conditions of wind and tide.

In spite of the cold and windy weather of the first week, crowds of people came to see the practice of the boats, and to try to find out which was going to win. According to custom, scratch crews, composed of old 'Varsity oars and men from the London and Kingston Rowing Clubs, rowed short races with the contending boats on several occasions, and one crew, with the formidable Gulston as stroke, raced both on the same day, with nearly the same result in each case; and from this trial it appeared that the struggle

might be expected to be a very close one. On the 27th, however, Cambridge covered half a mile in three seconds less than Oxford, rowing a slower stroke than the latter; and if this was a genuine test of their capabilities, Cambridge was certain to win, as the fatigue caused by rowing the faster stroke would be fatal to Oxford after two or three miles of the course.

On Saturday morning a dense fog hung over London, and many were the fears expressed that the day would prove an unfavourable one, but fortunately about noon the sun shone out bravely, and the weather was as fine and clear and warm as in June; indeed the finest day for a 'Varsity race that we remember. From an early hour every line of approach, by road, rail, or river, was thronged with people intent on getting a good position at one or other of the favourite points of view, and the numbers who fringed the bank of the river were unprecedented. By the arrangements of the Thames Conservancy, all vessels between Putney and Mortlake were directed to take up moorings at certain indicated parts of the river, and so numerous were the barges, steamers, and other craft, that the race was rowed over a course bounded almost from start to finish by two lines of craft of every description.

The names and weights of the crews were:

CAMBRIDGE.

	St. lb.
1. James B. Close, First Trinity	11 3
2. E. Hoskyns, Jesus	11 2
3. J. E. Peabody, First Trinity	11 7
4. W. Lecky-Browne, Jesus ..	12 1½
5. T. S. Turnbull, Trinity Hall	12 12½
6. C. S. Read, First Trinity ..	12 13
7. C. W. Benson, Third Trinity	11 5½
H. E. Rhodes, Jesus (stroke)	11 1½
C. H. Candy, Caius (coxswain)	7 5

OXFORD.

	St. lb.
1. C. C. Knollys, Magdalen ..	10 11
2. J. B. Little, Christ Church	10 11
3. M. G. Farrer, Brasenose ..	11 13½
4. A. W. Nicholson, Magdalen	12 5
5. R. S. Mitchison, Pembroke	12 2
6. W. E. Sherwood, Christ Church	11 1
7. J. A. Ornsby, Lincoln ..	11 3
F. T. Dowding, St. John's (str.)	11 0
G. E. Frewer, St. John's (cox.)	7 10

The Oxford boat was the first to put off, and they paddled down to their station, where they were soon followed by Cambridge, and after very little delay, they were started at 2 h. 32 m. P.M., Oxford having, as usual, won the toss for the station. Rhodes started at 38 to the minute, but dropped almost immediately to the steady swing of 36 that they had rowed all through practice, and in spite of the 39 to the minute that Dowding 'piled on,' the nose of the Cambridge boat at once showed in front. At the Point they were a third of their length to the good, but in making the shoot to the Soapworks a little was lost by bad steering. At Hammersmith Bridge they led by three-quarters of a length, and half a mile higher up they were clear. Dowding spurted hard at Chiswick Eyot, and drew his boat up to the stern of his opponent at the church, but he was unable to get any nearer, and the Light Blues again drew away. At Barnes Bridge they led by two lengths, and won by three lengths and a quarter, finishing with a spurt of 39 to the minute, as if to show that the race had been mere child's-play to them. They won very easily indeed, and never were headed from start to finish.

The time of the race, 19 min. 35 sec., the fastest on record, must be accounted for by the sliding seats. The Cambridge crew were not above the average, for al-

though strong and heavy, they were rather rough in style, and even until the day of the race were not so taking to the uninitiated eye as Oxford. Rhodes had orders to make a waiting race of it, or they could have won by a good deal more. The Oxford crew were not nearly so powerful as their opponents; they rowed with oars rather smaller in blade, and hardly seemed to use their slides so well, but we think they may ascribe their defeat more to the superior weight and strength of their opponents than to anything else. However, one crew must win, and Oxford has no cause to blush for her defeat, for her representatives rowed a most plucky and determined race, and were beaten by better men. The Cambridge crew averaged 5 lbs. a man heavier, and weight and strength tell more over a long course than a slight superiority of style.

The weather on Monday, 31st March, exhibited a painful contrast to the glorious spring day with which the boat-race crowds were favoured on Saturday. A steady drizzle set in about mid-day, and continued without cessation until three o'clock in the afternoon, and the wet and mud detracted greatly from the enjoyment of the numerous spectators of the sports at Lillie Bridge. The ground of the Amateur Athletic Club has never been celebrated for picturesqueness, and on such a day as this, it is one of the most dismal places in London; but so great and genuine is the interest felt in these competitions, that no weather, however unfavourable, would keep away the enthusiastic crowd of 'Varsity men and their friends who annually witness them. So far as sport goes, the 'grinds' are far preferable to the boat race; the crowd is

not great enough to prevent any one from seeing to his heart's content, and although one or two of the competitions are somewhat uninteresting, the excitement called forth by the long races makes ample amends. Added to this, most of the spectators have some knowledge of the previous performances of the competitors at the sports which are held shortly before at each University, and by the results of which their representatives are chosen; and, as happened on this occasion, there are generally certain 'knotty problems,' the solution of which is watched with the greatest interest.

At the preliminary competition held at Oxford, the running of Smith-Dorrien, Sandford, and Urmson, and the hammer-throwing of Browne, seemed to give the Dark Blues an overwhelming superiority —they having besides first-rate men for both jumps; and it was generally thought that Cambridge would have hard work to win more than two events. 'Times,' 'jumps,' 'throws' and 'puts,' however, improve so much every year, and with such an apparent regularity, that the *habitués* of the running-path reserved their opinion until the conclusion of the Cambridge sports; and their caution was justified, for the Light Blues had the advantage on paper in six out of the nine 'events,' but from the fact of their path being rather faster and the weather more favourable than that enjoyed by their opponents, an extremely close competition was expected.

The sports opened with the hammer-throwing, which, with the exception of putting the shot, is perhaps the least interesting athletic contest of the meeting. A certain amount of amusement is, however, derived, especially by the ladies, from the occasionally eccen-

tric throws of the competitors, and the peculiar roundabout motion necessary to obtain sufficient impetus to hurl a heavy hammer of sixteen pounds. The Cambridge men, Paterson and Pelham, towered above their smaller opponents, Browne and Todd, and, so far as the mere appearance of strength went, they ought to have won easily. However, every one of Browne's throws was better than any of the others. He threw five times ; the shortest being 117 ft. 4 in., and the longest, 122 ft. 6 in. ; thus beating his Oxford throw of 122 ft. 4 in., and having the highly-prized honour of making the 'longest on record.'

The next event, the hundred yards race, was attended with a certain amount of ill luck for the Light Blues. Their best man, Philpot, the hero of last year's quarter of a mile race, unfortunately broke down, after having won this event at Cambridge while running in a handicap ; and Wilson, last year's winner, was named on the card with Davies, the champion of the long jump, to do battle with Urmson and Ottaway for Oxford. Contrary to expectation, however, Philpot eventually ran. Of the Oxford men, Urmson was supposed by many to have won this race in 1871, after a close finish with Wilson ; but last year he was unable to compete for his University, having broken down in training. He is not a good starter ; and in this race Ottaway and Davies got away with a long lead of four yards. Urmson, however, was level with them at seventy yards, and, after a splendid struggle on the part of Davies, won by two yards. The time was given as 10½ seconds ; very fast, considering the ground.

Both these events had been considered certain to be won by the Dark Blues ; and equally safe was

thought the high jump for Cambridge. Their representative, Gurney, had jumped 5 ft. 9 in. ; and their second string, Prior, had cleared 5 ft. 6 in., the same height at which Graham and Woods, the Oxford men, had tied. Gurney won at 5 ft. 6 in. on this occasion ; the Oxonian, Woods, being unable to do more than 5 ft. 5 in., although it is only fair to mention that at his fourth essay he had a bad fall, which must have affected his jumping. Strangely enough, in this event last year, Graham slipped up and sprained his wrist so severely that he was unable to jump afterwards.

Great interest was felt in the mile, one of the 'knotty problems' for solution. Gunton had won pretty easily at Cambridge in 4 min. 34½ sec. ; and Smith-Dorrien at Oxford, in 4 min. 31½ sec., with Sandford and Bush close up, and Benson, who has never recovered from his break-down of last year, fourth. Smith-Dorrien, however, was reserved to run in the three miles ; and the Oxonians felt the utmost confidence in Sandford. Their opponents were equally certain that Gunton would be equal to the occasion, although, from the time, the chances seemed to be in favour of Oxford. Evans and Pelham also ran for Cambridge. Gunton led at the start, and made the pace very fast, but evidently not so fast as the Oxford men wished, for Bush took the lead and made the running until half the distance had been covered. Then the two Cambridge men, Gunton and Evans, again went to the front, with Sandford close up, and Benson last, Pelham being already out of it. They were all close together at the beginning of the last lap, when the pace became tremendous ; and about 250 yards from home, Benson made a great effort to get on level terms with

the leaders. However, they were too much for him, and on turning the corner into the straight run in home, he was beaten, and the race lay between Gunton and Sandford. The former had the foot of Sandford all the way, and won by about eight yards, in the splendid time of 4 min. 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ sec., the fastest, we believe, on record. Evans was third.

This success was received with great cheering by the Cantabs; and the next event, the broad jump, was another certainty for them, through Davies, the best man at this sport that has ever appeared in public. Owing, however, to the slippery state of the grass, he only cleared 21 ft. 3 in., beating the Oxford man, Nash, by nearly a foot.

The quarter mile is always a favourite race, having the advantage of being run at a very fast pace all the way, and also lasting long enough to give spectators a better view of the competitors than the hundred. For Oxford, were Urmson and Snow; and for Cambridge, Brodie and Templer; the latter the winner of the Cambridge quarter, and thought good enough to win this, even if Cambridge did not succeed in running first and second. The running was cut out by Snow, Urmson lying last, and the Cambridge men running close together between them, and Templer being evidently disappointed at both corners. On turning into the straight, Urmson came through his men and running as fast as ever to the finish, cut them all down and won by eight yards; Snow second, and Templer, to the great astonishment of his friends, being at least twelve yards from the winner. The time was fast, 51 $\frac{3}{4}$ sec., but Urmson won easily, and the Cambridge men ran with bad judgment.

Each University had now won three events, and each had suffered

a disappointment. Of the three to come, Cambridge was expected to win the 'shot,' as Littleton, their representative, had 'put' 36 ft. 8 in., considerably farther than Browne, the best man for Oxford. As in the hammer-throwing, the Cantabs, Littleton and Winthrop, were immensely bigger men than Browne and Hodges; but again were the Light Blues disappointed, for Littleton could 'put' no farther than 34 ft. 1 in., and Browne scored his second win with a 'put' of 35 ft. 2 in., which was excellent, considering the wet state of the grass.

The hurdle race, which was won by Upcher for Oxford, was the fifth win scored by the Dark Blues, thus deciding the result of the sports; and great was the cheering when their men were seen finishing first and second. The Cambridge men were Davies and Beauchamp: but probably the former had had something taken out of him by his exertions in the hundred and the long jump, and the Oxonians won somewhat easily. Garnier, who won last year, got off badly, and also touched one of his hurdles, as in the race at Oxford, and Upcher won by a bare foot in 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ sec.

The last event of the day was the three mile race. This was considered, justly, to be a match between Smith-Dorrien and Somerville, the latter of whom had won easily at Cambridge in 15 min. 48 $\frac{3}{4}$ sec., and the former, besides his fine performance in the Oxford mile, had won the three-mile race in 15 min. 59 sec. The other competitors were never in it, for in the second lap the race was reduced to a match between Smith-Dorrien and Somerville. The latter made the running, but was passed no less than eight times by the Oxonian, whose style is much freer and more 'raking' than his opponent's. Each time that he was passed, Somerville spurted and in

a few strides was again leading, never by more than two or three yards, until at a quarter of a mile from home, Smith-Dorrien raced past his man and led him by a gradually increasing distance to the far corner of the ground, where Somerville, after vainly endeavouring to get up to him, collapsed, and left the other to finish as he pleased. The race was run with the greatest pluck by both men, but Somerville was never able to shake off his man, and was completely run out at the finish. The excitement was almost as great as in this race last year, when Benson made a dead heat with Hawtrey on the post, and the spectators broke into the ground when Somerville gave way, and gave the winner a perfect ovation. The time was 15 min. 18 sec.

So the sports were over and Oxford had scored six wins to three. They were most interesting throughout and capitally con-

tested, and the times, considering the state of the path, remarkably good, especially the mile and three miles. Cannot the University men consent to a slight alteration in their programme, and substitute a walking race for the shot-putting, which savours more of gymnastics than of what is generally understood as 'athletic sports'? They have such a competition in their sports at both Oxford and Cambridge, although walking is not much cultivated at either University, probably in consequence of not being included in the Inter-University programme. We quite expect to see such an alteration soon.

In conclusion, we may remark that Oxford has won the boat race sixteen times and Cambridge fourteen; the sports have resulted in favour of Oxford four times and Cambridge six.

SUMMER EVES.

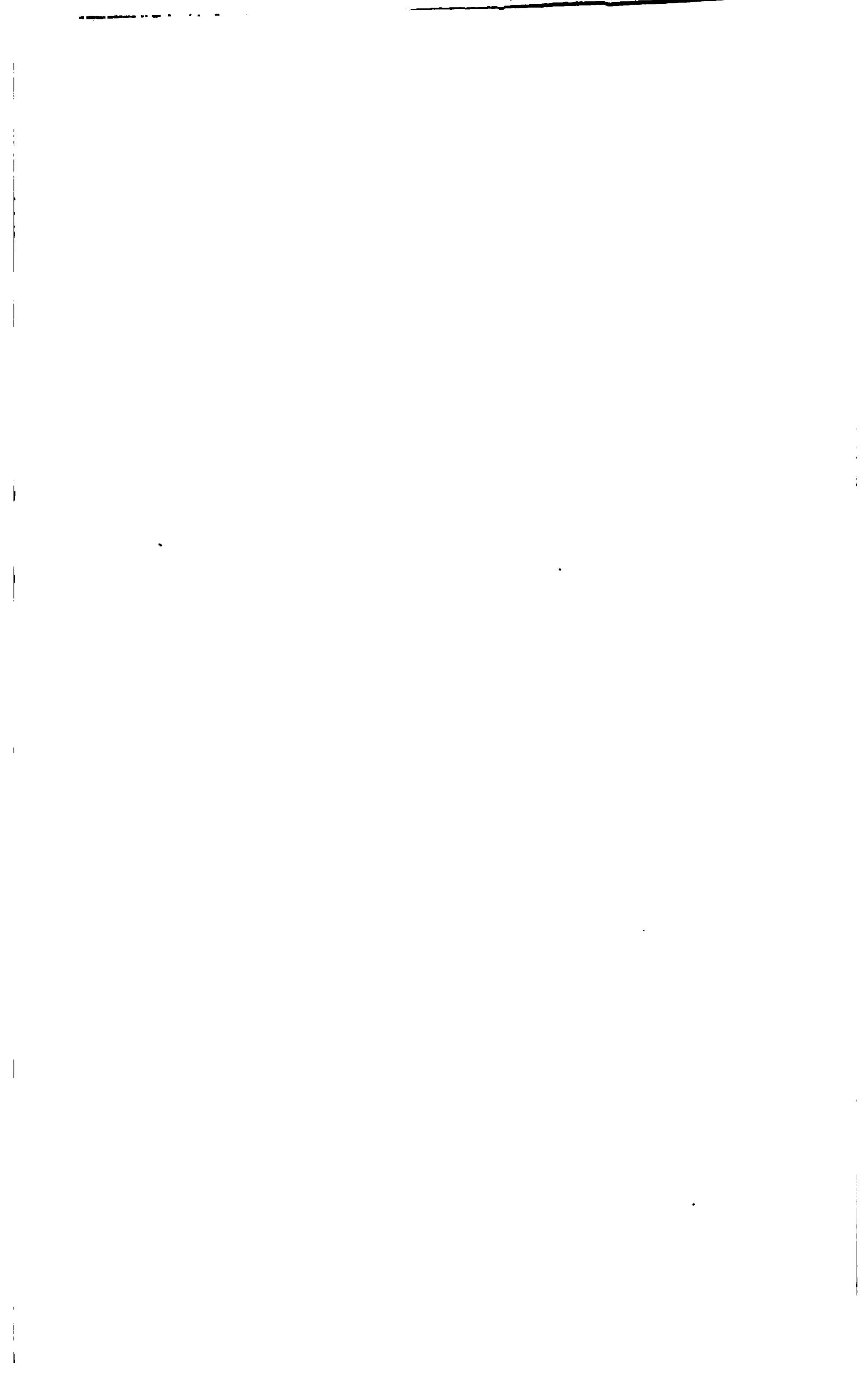
MY MIND is full of memories to-day
 That have the music of old nursery rhymes.
 While Kate and Totty here have been at play,
 Have I been in a trance of other times—
 Of summer eves that slid by, one by one,
 Like angels passing to another land,
 But they have left their joys, though they are gone,
 And lift the curtain with a gentle hand.

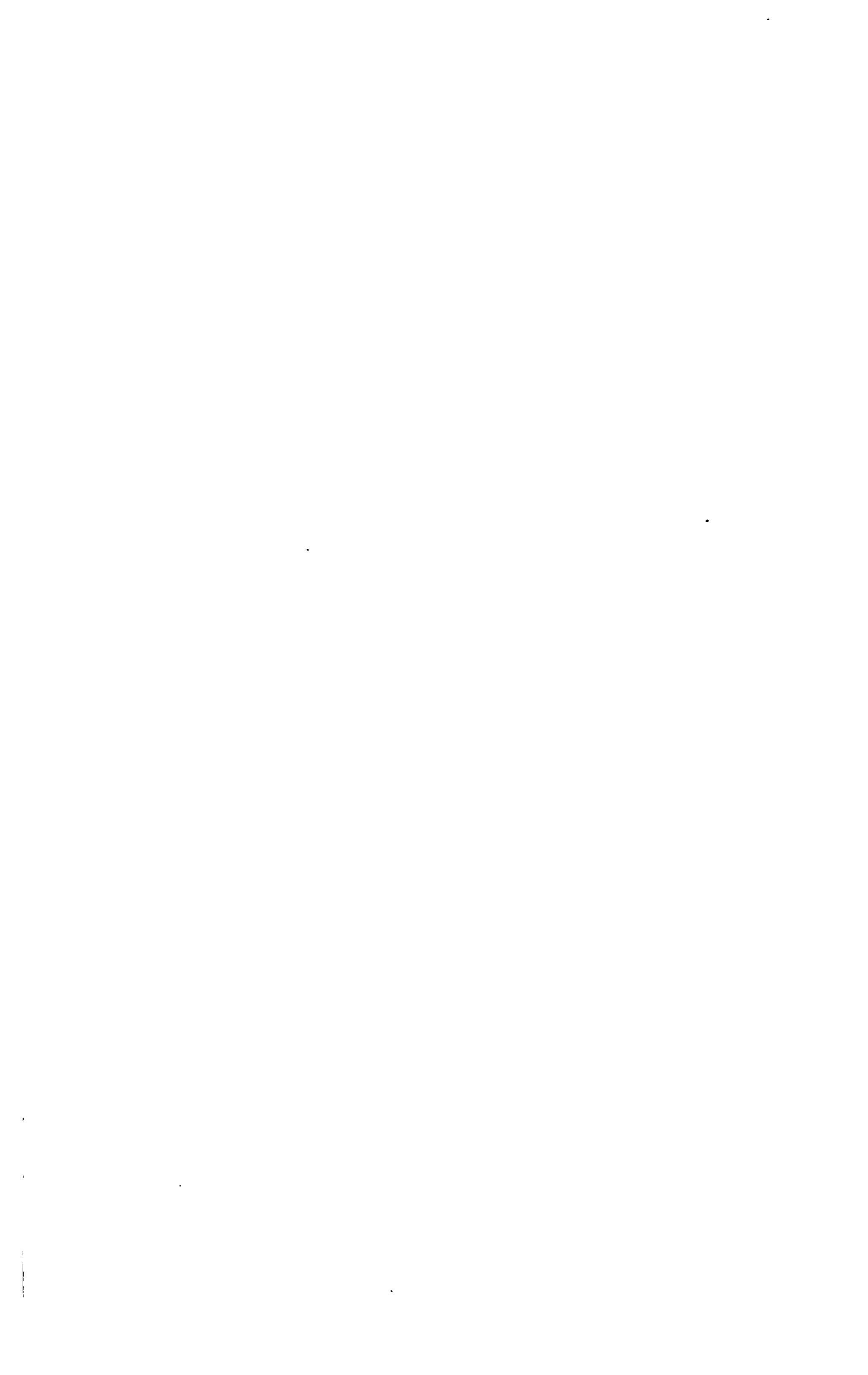
It was a summer eve when Arthur came
 And spoke the things that I may not forget ;
 The poppies then, as now, were all aflame,
 And there was sweetness with the mignonette.
 That night a new moon sailed, and spoke of truth
 That should encircle all our years below :
 Our love, like to the moon, was in its youth,
 And there was hope in its faint, tender glow.

A summer eve, again he came to me,
 And I was joyous, who had been forlorn ;
 We sat together by the apple-tree,
 And ere he left we knew our marriage morn.
 That night a half-moon lit the moving length
 Of forest trees ; and our love, like the moon,
 Had more of gentle light and passion's strength,
 And it would come to sweeter fairness soon.

The summer eves fell into summer days,
 And each bright day new happiness was born,
 Till we went by the quiet village ways
 To Abbey Church, and it was marriage morn.
 That night the full moon rose with glorious shine,
 And showed the garden treasures at our feet ;
 And our love, like the moon, was full and fine,
 And our divine felicity complete.

GUY ROSLYN.







‘NO INTENTIONS.’

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF ‘LOVE’S CONFLICT,’ ‘VÉRONIQUE,’ ETC.

CHAPTER III.

IT is on a glorious July afternoon that Colonel Mordaunt brings his wife to Fen Court. There is no railway station within ten miles of Priestley, but an open carriage meets them on arrival at the nearest town, and as they roll homewards through long country lanes, bordered with hedges in which the bramble flower and the woodbine have joined issue to pull the wild roses and the purple nightshade to the ground, Irene experiences a sense of silent calm which makes her believe that she has at last breasted successfully the billows of life, and emerged thence with the greatest good this world affords us in her hand—contentment! They have had a long and tedious journey from Weymouth; the sun has been inconveniently warm, and the railway carriages filled with dust, and even good-natured people might be excused from feeling a little peevish or impatient by the close of day; but Irene and Colonel Mordaunt seem admirably fitted to get on together. She is all gentle acquiescence to anything he may propose (gratitude and indifference being the principal ingredients in submission), and he is devoted to his young wife, and has spent his time hitherto in anticipating her wishes, but in a manner so unobtrusive as to have rendered even the honeymoon agreeable to her. For, whatever may be the general opinion to the contrary, the honeymoon is not always the happiest part of married life; indeed there are few instances of it in which both husband and wife are not secretly

pleased when it is drawing to a close. Brides who are worshipped as divinities during the first week are apt to become *exigeantes* during the last three, and bridegrooms are sometimes forced to confess the melancholy truth that ‘the full soul loatheth the honeycomb.’ I have known a seven days’ wife cry all the afternoon because her husband went to sleep on the sofa; and a freshly-made Benedict plead law, sickness, business, anything, in order to procure a run up to town during the fatal moon, and a few hours’ cessation from the continuous tax laid on his patience, gallantry, and temper. Many a married life that has ended in misery might have flowed on evenly enough had it not been for the injury done to a woman’s character during that month of blandishments and folly. It requires a strong mind to accept at their true worth all the nonsense a man talks and all the foolish actions of which he is guilty during those first rapturous moments of possession—and women, as a rule, are not strong-minded. All the hyperbole of passion, which until then they have only heard in furtive lovers’ whispers, is now poured out boldly at their feet, and the geese imagine it to be a specimen or a promise of what their future life shall be. A fortnight sees the ardour cooled; in a month it has evaporated, and thenceforth they are judged, not as goddesses, but women. How few stand the test and can step down gracefully from the pedestal on which they have been unna-

turally exalted to the level of their husbands' hearts, let the lives of our married acquaintances answer for us. But whether it would prevent the final issue or not, it is nevertheless true that the happiness of many a man and woman would not come so quickly to a close, were the latter treated with a little more discretion during the honeymoon. As husbands intend to go on so should they begin. A woman is a suspicious animal; her experience is small, her views are narrow, her range of sight limited; and more men have been whined and teased and irritated out of their love than stormed out of it. There is no more miserable mistake in life than to attempt to warm up a fading passion: *réchauffés* are never worth much, but this style of *réchauffé* pays the worst of all. If wives would be reasonable, they will take all that is offered them; but never stoop to extract an unwilling avowal of affection, which will burn none the brighter for being dragged to the light of day. A little happy indifference is the best possible medicine for a drooping love; and the injunction to 'leave them alone and they'll come home,' holds as good with men as with the flock of Bo-peep. Irene Mordaunt bids fair to keep her husband's devotion in a healthy condition by this means. Her manner towards him is as sweet and gentle as it can be, but it naturally possesses no ardour; and this want of passion on her part is just sufficient to keep his middle-aged flame burning very brightly, without giving him any anxiety on account of hers.

He would have preferred, like other men, to make a fool of himself during the honeymoon (and the adage that 'there is no fool like an old fool' holds truer in love than any other feeling), but

something in Irene's quiet and sensible manner has forbidden it, and compelled him to treat her as if they had been married for several years. And yet she is not cold to him—she does not repulse his attentions nor refuse to acknowledge them; on the contrary, as they commence their drive to Priestley, and he wraps a shawl about her feet, and makes her put them upon the opposite seat, the smile with which she thanks him would be sufficient to put a younger man 'off his head.'

'How beautiful the country is!' she says, as they pass fields of clean-shorn sheep, and rosy children bobbing curtseys by the cottage gates, and waggons of late-gathered hay breathing 'odours of Araby' as they crawl by; 'how sweet and clean everything looks and smells. Philip, I long to see the garden; I am so fond of flowers. Do you remember the lovely bouquets you used to send me in Brussels?'

'Perfectly, my darling' (Colonel Mordaunt seldom calls his wife anything but 'darling,' and the word has ceased to grate on her ears as it did at first, recalling the lost voice that spoke it once); 'and how you used to turn your nose up at my humble offerings.'

'I never told you so, Philip; that must be an invention of your own.'

'Perhaps I divined it, Irene; for my eyes were very keen for anything that concerned you in those days.'

'Well, it was very wicked of me, then, and I promise that I won't turn up my nose at the first bouquet you give me from Fen Court.'

'You shall have a beauty the very first thing in the morning. I hope the garden will be in good order—I have given sufficient directions on the subject.'

'Doesn't Isabella care for flowers?'

'Not much, I think. She is a strange creature in some of her ways. I sometimes wonder, darling, how you and she will get on with one another.'

'Why, admirably, of course—I mean to get on with her.'

Colonel Mordaunt turns round and gazes at his wife adoringly.

'You are *too* good!' he says; 'Oh, Irene! if I don't make you happy, may God's judgment—'

'Hush! hush!' she interrupts him quickly, 'pray don't say that, you make me feel so small.'

But see how much less than a woman she would have been not to care for him, who had taken her to his arms, despite his knowledge of her outraged affections, and treated her as though she had flown to them of her own accord. She does not *love* him, this gallant gentleman who almost worships her, but she is very grateful and almost happy, and bids fair to make a model wife and mistress. As the carriage reaches the entrance to Fen Court, and rolls up the broad drive through the shrubbery, she becomes quite excited in her admiration.

'Is this *ours*—really?' she exclaims, inquiringly.

'It is *yours*, my own darling, every inch of it!' replies her husband.

'Oh! Philip!' and in her delight and surprise she turns and kisses him, for the first time of her own accord.

Colonel Mordaunt flushes up to his eyes with gratification, and this trifling episode has the power to dispel much of the nervousness with which he has looked forward to introducing his wife to Fen Court.

'Here we are, at last!' he exclaims, as the carriage stops before the bold porch, and a couple of

menservants appear upon the doorstep. 'Jump down, my darling; Isabella is sure to be waiting for you, and you must be tired to death with this long drive.'

'I am not at all tired,' is her rejoinder; 'and I mean to see every bit of the garden before I go to bed to-night.'

Miss Mordaunt is waiting for them in the hall.

'Oh my dear Mrs. Mordaunt! I came—I thought, perhaps—I didn't know—'

'Did you not expect us so soon?' replies Irene, stooping to kiss her sister-in-law. 'I think we have come rather quickly.'

'Quickly!' echoes Colonel Mordaunt, who is close upon her heels; 'why, we have been hours on the road. What time have you ordered dinner, Isabella?'

'At seven—at least I believe at seven—but if you would rather not—'

'The sooner the better,' says her brother; 'seven will do admirably. And now, if you will take Irene up to her bedroom and help her off with her things, I think she will be obliged to you. You won't dress to-night, darling?'

'Oh, no! Philip; only take the dust off. What a wide staircase, and such pretty carpets! Oh! is this my room? it is beautiful. How nice and fresh it looks. And blue, too! I wonder who chose blue? it is my favourite colour.'

'It was my brother who ordered it to be refurnished with this colour. Can I help you off with your bonnet, Mrs. Mordaunt? or perhaps—if you had rather be alone—if I had better go—'

'Oh, no! don't go! I shall be ready directly. But why do you not call me by my Christian name? Surely we are not to be "Miss" and "Mrs." to one another!'

'If you wish it—of course—but I shouldn't have thought—'

Miss Mordaunt's deprecating manner is already casting a chill over Irene's coming home.

'Since we are to be sisters, I think it should be so,' she answers, with a glance of scrutiny at her companion; but she is not so eager in her manner of addressing her again, and it is a relief to hear her husband's voice asking for admittance.

'Have you everything you want—are you quite comfortable? Isabella, where is Mrs. Quekett? I thought she would be here to welcome Irene to Fen Court.'

Miss Mordaunt telegraphs a look of meaning to her brother—it is very slight, but Irene catches it, and feels immediately that there is something to be concealed.

'Who is Mrs. Quekett?' she demands abruptly, looking from one to the other.

'The housekeeper——' commences Miss Mordaunt.

'Well, hardly a housekeeper, Isabella, although she certainly does keep house for us,' interrupts her brother.

'She does keep house for you, and yet she is not your housekeeper,' says Irene, merrily; 'she must be an anomaly, this Mrs. Quekett. Pray is she young or old, fat or thin, wise or foolish? though, after what you have just said, Philip, I should not be at all surprised to hear she is all of them put together.'

'You are a saucy girl, and don't deserve an answer; but when you come to know her, you will acknowledge that Mrs. Quekett is a very wonderful woman, and can be almost anything she chooses. When I said she was hardly a housekeeper, I meant she was superior to the place. But she lived for many years with my father in that capacity, and has always had a home with me since his death. You will find her a

great help to you, darling, for I'm sure you cannot know much about housekeeping; and I hope you will get on very well together.'

'There is no doubt of it; I always get on well with servants; that is, if they keep their places. But with regard to housekeeping, Philip, I intend to agreeably surprise you. I know much more than you imagine, and mean to make myself perfect. I always thought I should like to have a large house like this to look after, and to keep in spick-span order. I like pretty things, but the romance of untidiness never held any charms for me. I was cut out for an old maid.'

'It is lucky for me, darling, that we met before you had made up your mind unalterably upon that subject,' says Colonel Mordaunt, laughing, as he draws her arm within his own to lead her to the dining-room. 'But, however good a manager you may be, I am sure you will find Mrs. Quekett an admirable assistant, to say the very least of it. She has been always used to manage the household affairs, and, were I you, I should leave them in her hands. Why should you trouble your head about such matters, when I can afford to keep some one to do it for you?'

'Mrs. Quekett will have plenty to do, Philip. I did not mean that I should rise with the lark each morning to call the maids, or walk about in the trail of the broom and dust-pan, to see that they do their duty; but I've no opinion of a mistress who leaves her work to the servants. Have you?'

At these words Isabella again steals one of those furtive, mutual-understanding glances at Colonel Mordaunt, with an expression that rouses not only Irene's curiosity, but her spirit, and she does not

wait for an answer to her question :

'At all events, I mean to try and make myself equal to the position you have placed me in, Philip,' she continues.

'And you would be so, my darling, a thousand times over,' he whispers, fondly, 'even had I placed you on a throne.'

This conversation gives a brief insight to the state of mind in which Irene enters on the performance of her new duties. The glances which she intercepted between her sister-in-law and her husband do not give her more than a moment's uneasiness, whilst they strengthen her purpose' of self-dependence.

She misinterprets their meaning; she imagines they arose from their doubt of her capability to maintain her position as mistress of Fen Court; and she becomes determined, in consequence, to prove that they are mistaken. From the hour she accepted Colonel Mordaunt's proposal, and fixed her thoughts upon a future shared with him, Irene has experienced more pleasure from the prospect of having the entire management of the household at Fen Court upon her hands than anything else.

For, in order to fight successfully with disappointment, or even to fight at all, we must have some definite employment. A man generally has a business or profession to engross his loyal thoughts and shut the door in the face of all the rebel ones (though what a knack they have of peeping through the chinks!); with him the grinding necessity of making bread, either for himself or others, is paramount, and leaves little leisure for painful introspection. It is not that he

feels the less for being busy: it is that he has less time to feel. The female sex has in all ages, most undeservedly, gained credit for being the more constant of the two: but, though they mourn more explosively, their grief is neither so bitter nor so long. A man and woman who love each other are irrevocably separated: what happens to them? He seldom speaks of his loss to any one; if he does, it is in short, sharp sentences, that are dismissed as soon as possible: and he goes about his work as usual; worries his head over the ledger in his counting - house; strains every nerve to outwit the counsel for the other side; conducts three or four services a day, or sits up all night writing for the press. Every now and then, doubtless, a sad thought comes between him and his employment; he sees her, or hears of her, or the remembrance of something they have shared in the past smites him with sudden pain; but he puts it away: he *must* put it away, if he is to pursue the business which depends upon his brain, or hand, or skill. Where is the woman, meanwhile, who mourns him, poor wretch, as hopelessly (I have no wish to detract from the sex's capability of loving) as only a woman can?

Sitting by the fire, most likely, if it is winter, or lying on her bed if it is summer, with a novel in her hand, or a piece of fancy work, and all her mind fixed upon her absent lover: ready and willing to talk over the cruelty of her disappointment with the first friend who calls: crying till she can hardly see out of her eyes: refusing to attend any party of pleasure (women think giving up balls and theatres and concerts an immense proof of constancy; they don't understand how the lightest laughter is often used to

conceal the heaviest hearts); even refusing to eat: sitting down, in fact, with her dead love in her lap, determined to nurse it and weep over it, and recall all she has lost with it, until she makes herself first hysterical and then useless, and lastly ill, and a worry to every one connected with her. Our friends die, and we bury them. Why can't we bury the corpses of our dead hopes in the same way? The regret we feel for those whom we have lost by death is sad enough and sharp enough, God knows, as it returns in the silent watches of the night, or even amidst the clamorous hurry of the day; but what would it not be were we to keep those still forms ever beside us, to prevent all hope of sorrow sinking into natural sleep? Yet that is what most women do with their blighted affections; and many of them experience actual disappointment when they discover that Time has mercifully closed the wound, and they are 'getting over it.' They keep it open as long as they possibly can; they tear the bandage away which opportunity affords them; and when the healed spot is no longer capable of laceration, they will sit down and begin to cry afresh over their own inconstancy. And, perhaps, when they have reached this epoch, the man is still experiencing those occasional sharp, cruel stabs of remembrance which are all the worse to bear because they come so seldom, and the flesh is unused to them.

But if women were brought up to work like men (in other kind, perhaps, but with the same necessity), active employment, either of brain or hand, would place the sexes, in this matter, on a level; and whilst much needless misery would be spared to the one, a large amount of comfort would

accrue to the other; for, of all persons with whom to shun intercourse in this life, give me the flabby thing which calls itself a woman who has had '*a disappointment*'—as though there were no disappointment in the world but that which springs from love turned sour with adversity, like small beer by thunder.

Irene has never been a woman utterly without a purpose. In her early girlhood, and before she experienced any necessity to gamble with life for forgetfulness, she was accustomed to look upon each day in which she had done nothing as a day to be regretted. She used to read much at that time, not desultorily, but on a fixed plan; and she would allow no pleasure, however tempting, to lure her from her self-imposed task until it was accomplished. She took a very bright interest in politics; in the projects for improving the condition of the nation at large, and all new discoveries, whether in art, science, or nature; attempted, also, as most able minds do, to put down her thoughts on all these things in writing, but was quite satisfied with the ample variety of mental food which ancient and modern literature placed before her, and never had the least desire to cram her own ideas down the throats of others. In fine, until the unfortunate moment arrived in which she met Eric Keir, Irene was a happy, helpful, matter-of-fact woman; and though the two blows which she received so close together did for awhile crush life's purpose out of her and blur her vision of a noble and elevated future, it is all coming back to her now as she finds herself mistress of Fen Court, and the mists that obscured her duty are clearing away from before her eyes. To make her husband's house what it

should be (and what Colonel Mordaunt has already deplored, in her hearing, that it is not), one of the best-appointed and pleasantest houses in the county; to render herself an agreeable, favourite hostess; to be the ruler of his household, the friend of his tenants, and the benefactor of the poor who are dependent on him—this is the path which she has chalked out for herself, and in which she is resolute to walk. Some women think it beneath them to make their husbands' homes comfortable. They want to deliver lectures like Emily Faithfull, or write books like Mrs. Riddell, or compose songs like Elizabeth Philp, or play *Juliet* like Mrs. Scott Siddons; and if they are not permitted to labour through the medium of the stage, the platform, or the press, their mission is wrested from them: there is nothing more to live for.

Irene Mordaunt knows better. She knows that if genius is not required to keep the machinery of a large establishment in working order, good sense is; and, however capable and far-seeing and practical her head may be, it is none too much so for the worthy employment of the large sums of money that must annually pass through her hands. She does not think the work beneath her; she feels like a queen entering upon her territory; and as her husband, when their dinner is ended, makes the tour with her of his possessions, she notes with a keen eye where improvement is most needed, and registers inward vows to be faithful to the trust committed to her. The knowledge of her responsibility works on Irene like a charm: her spirits rise; her eyes become brighter, her pulses beat more healthfully, and she retires to rest full of expectation for the coming morrow. Such

are some of the good effects of realising that there is work left in the world to do which no one can accomplish so well as ourselves. Had Irene remained at Laburnum Cottage with Mrs. Cavendish, she might have continued to be a lovesick maiden to this day; as it is, the task which she has undertaken with a sincere intention of fulfilling, will lift her, step by step, above the earth-stained troubles of the world, until she has reached the highest elevation her mortal nature is capable of attaining.

She wakes in the morning, fresh as a flower, and active as a squirrel. She has not opened her eyes two seconds before she has thrown up the casement and is inhaling the sweetness of the noisette roses that cluster round it. The pure, cool country air is like a draught of life; the scented flowers are hanging, six and eight upon one stem; across the meadow comes the lowing of the cows as they return from the milking shed, and the bleating of the calves that welcome them; and underneath her are the gardeners, sharpening their scythes to mow the dewy lawn. The freshness, the sweetness, the simplicity, the peace of all around her, wake the deepest gratitude in Irene's heart, and make the tears rise to her eyes. She is all anxiety to mingle again in the scenes that lie before her; to retrace her footsteps of last night, and make sure that it was all reality; and before Colonel Mordaunt has realised that she has left him, she is up and dressed, and roaming over the wet grass and through the shrubberies and gardens, whence, at sound of the breakfast-bell, she reappears, with rose-tinted cheeks, damp boots, a draggled muslin dress, and her hands full of flowers. Her hus-

band, now looking one way and now the other, is on the door-step, anxiously awaiting her.

'My darling!' he commences, reproachfully.

'Now, Philip, don't scold! I know I'm a horrid object, but it won't take me a minute to change. I've been all through the hot-houses and the kitchen gardens, and down the wilderness, and over the bridge by that piece of water; and then I got into a field and found lots of mushrooms. (Do you like mushrooms? they're in my skirt, under the flowers.) And I came back by the meadows you showed me last night, where the horses are, and—oh! I am so tired and so wet; but I haven't enjoyed anything like it for months past.'

Colonel Mordaunt looks as though he were enjoying the recital as much as she has done the reality.

'I am so glad to hear it,' he says, as he kisses her; 'but you can come in to breakfast as you are, can you not?'

'What! with my hair half-way down my back, and my dress clinging to me like a wet flag? I should scarcely look dignified at the head of your table, Philip. Give me ten minutes' grace, to set myself to rights. Good morning, Isabella. I have not a hand to offer you, but I have had such a delightful ramble.'

Then she turns to the servant in attendance.

'Take these flowers, James, and place them on the sideboard; and bring up the breakfast. Have you been used to make the tea, Isabella? Will you be so good as to do so for one morning more, in consideration of the novelty of the situation? I will be in good time to-morrow, Philip; but I had no idea the place was half so lovely, and I ran on from one delight to

another, and could not tear myself away.'

She is mounting the staircase now, still attended by her husband; and Miss Mordaunt looks after her with unfeigned surprise. So young and strange—and yet so cool and at her ease! The woman who has spent all her life in fear, lest she should be saying or doing something wrong, cannot understand the confidence which is engendered by a knowledge of our own powers of pleasing. In another minute Irene is down again, her hair rearranged, and her dress exchanged for a wrapper of pale blue, which is wonderfully becoming to her; and as her sister-in-law sees her smile, and hears her talk, and watches her do all the honours of the breakfast-table as though she had sat there for years, she marvels how so bright an apparition can ever have been persuaded to link her fortunes with those of Philip, and take up her residence at Fen Court.

'What are you going to do to-day, Philip?' says Irene, as the meal draws to a conclusion.

Colonel Mordaunt has already risen from table, and taken up his station on the hearthrug.

'Well, that depends mostly on yourself, my darling. I have a great deal to do, of course, after two months' absence, about the kennel and the farm; but I should hardly like to leave you alone so soon.'

'But I shall have Isabella, and plenty of employment. There are all my things to be unpacked; and the new maid seems stupid; so I shall go and superintend her; and I have the dinner to order, and the kitchen to inspect, and to make the acquaintance of Mrs. What's-her-name.'

Colonel Mordaunt starts.

'Mrs. Quekett! Ah! true; I should like to introduce Mrs.

Quekett to you before I go out, Irene. She is such a very old servant of the family.'

'All right, dear. Ring the bell, and tell her to come up now. I am quite ready to see her.'

Again does Isabella raise deprecating eyes to her brother's face. Something, which the unsuspecting bride is sure to resent, must come to the surface before long, and, man-like, Colonel Mordaunt tries to throw the responsibility of the disclosure on to his sister's shoulders.

'Oh!—ah!—yes; to be sure! I suppose Mrs. Quekett will be able to see Irene now, Isabella?'

The mere question throws Miss Mordaunt into a state of extra flurry.

'I don't know, Philip—I know so little, you see. I am sure I cannot say. Perhaps you had better—but if Mrs. Mordaunt could wait—it is no use to ask me.'

'Is the old woman ill?' demands Irene. It is the only solution of the apparent mystery she can imagine.

'Bless you! no! as well as you are,' says her husband, forgetting the inexpediency of the confession; 'only used to rise late. She has had no mistress, you know, my darling, and you must make some excuses for her in consequence; but—there, I hope to goodness you will get on well together, and have no quarrels or disagreements of any sort.'

'Quarrels, Philip, with the servants!—you need have no fear of that. If Mrs. Quekett has not yet risen, I can easily give my orders for to-day to the cook: I suppose she is efficient and trustworthy?'

'Oh, yes; only, don't you think that it would be better, just at first, you know, to leave things as they are, and let Quekett manage the dinners for you?'

'No, Philip; I don't. I think, were I to do so, that I should be very likely never to gain any proper authority amongst my servants; and I should rather begin as I intend to go on. I see you have not much faith in my house-keeping,' she continues, gaily; 'but you have never had an opportunity of judging my powers. Wait till this evening. What time shall we dine?'

'When you choose, my darling; but seven has been the usual hour. I think, Isabella,' turning to his sister, 'that, as Irene says, it will be better for her to give her dinner orders this morning to the cook: what do you say?'

'O, don't ask me, Philip; it must be just as you please: only, what will Quekett think?'

'You can explain the matter to her, surely; and by to-morrow she will be acquainted with Irene. Perhaps she had better not see her till I return. I will come back to lunch.'

'What a fuss about nothing!' says Irene, laughing. 'My dear Philip, one would think I had never had the management of any servants before. I see how it is—the old housekeeper is jealous of my coming, and you are afraid she may let me see it. Well, then, have no fears; I will talk her out of her jealousy, and we shall be the best of friends by the time you return.'

'Who could resist you?' replies the enamoured Colonel, as he embraces his wife, and leaves the room.

'Now, the very first thing I want to see, Isabella,' says Irene, rising from her chair, 'is the drawing-room; for people will be coming to call on me by-and-by, you know, and I never fancy a sitting-room till I have arranged it according to my own taste. Will you come with me? You must let

me be very *exigeante* for the first few days, and keep you all to myself.'

For this expression of interest, to which she is so unaccustomed, Isabella Mordaunt feels very much inclined to cast her arms about the speaker's neck and thank her; but her natural nervousness rises uppermost, and she only looks foolish and uneasy.

'The drawing-room!—well, I hardly know—of course it is no business of mine—but I think it is locked.'

'Locked!—don't you use it, then?'

'Not often—that is to say, only when we have a dinner-party.'

'Oh, I mean to use it every day, and make it the prettiest room in the house. Let us go and inspect it at once. Who has the key?—Quekett?'

'I believe so—I am not sure,' commences Miss Mordaunt. Irene answers by ringing the bell.

'James, desire Mrs. Quekett, or whoever has the key of the drawing-room, to send it down to me.'

There is a delay of several minutes, and then the footman reappears, with the key in his hand, and a comical expression in his face, half of pleasure and half of fear, as though a battle had been found necessary in order to achieve his purpose, but that he rather liked the warfare than otherwise. Irene thrusts her arm through that of her sister-in-law, and leads her off in triumph.

'Shocking! Horrible!' is her verdict, as the glories of the Fen Court drawing-room come to view. 'My dear Isabella, how could you allow things to remain like this? No flowers—no white curtains—and all the furniture done up in brown holland, as though we had gone out of town. The first thing we must do is to strip off those

horrid covers. Where is the house-maid?'

'But, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt'—Isabella cannot yet pluck up courage to address her sister-in-law by any other name—'she thinks—that is, Mrs. Quekett thinks—they are quite necessary for the preservation of the damask.'

'And I think them quite unnecessary,' retorts Irene, merrily. 'Here, Anne; take off these covers; strip the muslin off the chandeliers, and open all the windows. The room feels as though a corpse had been laid out in it! What a fine piano!—that must come out into the middle of the room.'

'It has always stood against the wall,' says Isabella.

'Then I am sure it is quite time it had a change. Oh! what a lovely thing for flowers!' seizing on an old basin of embossed silver which stands on the floor; 'what is this rubbish in it?—rose-leaves? Turn them out, Anne, and put the bowl on the sideboard in the dining-room. And, stop!—take all the vases away at the same time: I never keep a vase in sight unless it is filled with flowers.'

'Yes, ma'am; but, please, what am I to do with these dead leaves?'

'Throw them away.'

'Yes, ma'am; only,' looking towards Miss Mordaunt, 'Mrs. Quekett placed them here, you know, miss!'

'Yes; to be sure; so she did. I hardly know, Mrs. Mordaunt, whether you ought—'

'To throw away Quekett's rose-leaves?' with a hearty laugh; 'well, perhaps not; so you can return them to her, Anne, if you choose; only please to relieve my bowl of them as soon as possible.'

Then she flits away, altering the disposition of the chairs and tables; discarding the ornaments which she considers in bad taste; scattering music on the open piano,

books and work upon the table, and flowers everywhere—doing all that a woman can, in fact, to turn a commonplace and dull-looking apartment into a temple of fanciful grace and beauty.

'Come, that is a little better!' she exclaims at last; 'but it will bear any amount of improvement yet. Flowers are the thing, Isabella; you can make even an ugly room look nice with plenty of flowers; and there are really beautiful things here. It shall be a very picture of a room before the week is out. And now to my dinner—I had nearly forgotten it. That old woman must be up by this time.'

'It is only just eleven,' replies Miss Mordaunt.

'As much as that!' with a look of dismay: 'my dear Isabella, I shall be all behind-hand, and when I have been boasting to Philip! I must see Quekett at once in the morning-room, and then we will arrange our plans for the day.'

She flies to the morning-room—a pleasant little apartment next the dining-room, which is to be dedicated to her use—and pulls the bell rather vigorously in her haste.

'James, desire Mrs. Quekett to come up to me at once.'

'Yes, ma'am,' replies James, and retires, inwardly chuckling. He reads the character of his new mistress, and views with unholy delight domestic differences looming in the distance.

'Won't there be a row!' he remarks, as the housemaid goes unwillingly to deliver the message at the door of Mrs. Quekett's room.

Now, as it happens, Mrs. Quekett is up and stirring; for curiosity to see the bride has overpowered her natural indolence; but she has not quite completed her toilette, and the unwelcome information that she is to 'go

downstairs at once and take her orders from the new missus in the morning-room' does not tend to promote her alacrity.

Another ten minutes have elapsed when Irene rings the bell again.

'Have you delivered my message to the housekeeper?'

'Yes, ma'am; and she's just coming down the stairs now.'

'She must be a little quicker another time,' his mistress murmurs. She feels, prophetically, that she is about to have trouble with this 'old servant of the family,' and she determines at once to assert her authority as head of her husband's household.

Mrs. Quekett enters: Irene looks up, meets her eye, and feels at once that they are enemies. There is something in the woman's glance and manner, even in this first interview, that savours so much of insolent familiarity, that her indignation is roused, and she can hardly speak to her without evincing it.

'I hope I see you well, ma'am,' says Mrs. Quekett, sinking into the nearest chair.

'Quite well, thank you!' replies Irene, choking down her wrath and trying to remember all her husband has told of the faithful services of the creature before her. 'I have sent for you, Quekett, to take the orders for the dinner. We are rather late this morning'—glancing at her watch—'but, as it is the first time, it is perhaps excusable.'

'Ah! I manage all that, ma'am; you will have no trouble about the dinners. I've pleased the Colonel and his father before him for over a matter of thirty years, and as I've begun so I shall go on. My cook gives me more trouble than she ought to do, but I shall get rid of her at Michaelmas, if not before, and try one from London instead. They're better taught than these

country women. You're from London yourself, aren't you?"

Under this address Irene sits for a moment stupefied. She can hardly believe she is listening to a servant speaking. She has never been used to hear the domestics in her parents' house address her but in the most deferential tones; and as she realises that it really is the housekeeper who sits before her, her blood boils with indignation, and the look she raises should have withered Mrs. Quekett in her chair.

'I think we had better keep to the matter in hand,' she answers, loftily. 'I intend to give my own orders, Mrs. Quekett, and it will be your place to transmit them to the other servants. I shall very soon be able to judge what the cook can do, and to decide on the necessity of parting with her or not. Meanwhile, we will speak about the dinner.'

She runs through the list of dishes rapidly, names the hour at which she desires the meal to be served, and enjoins the strictest punctuality on the astonished housekeeper.

'And to-morrow morning,' says Irene, as she rises from her chair, 'I must request you will be in this room by ten o'clock, to receive my orders—and if I am not here, you can wait for me. I shall go over the kitchens and lower offices this afternoon. Let the servants be prepared to receive me. And—one word, Mrs. Quekett: I have not been accustomed to see servants sit down in my presence.'

With that she sails out of the room with the air of an offended queen.

Mrs. Quekett is not subdued, but she is enraged beyond measure. She turns purple and gasps in the chair where her new mistress has left her; and it takes a great deal of bottled porter and a great many

stewed kidneys that morning to restore her to anything like her usual equanimity.

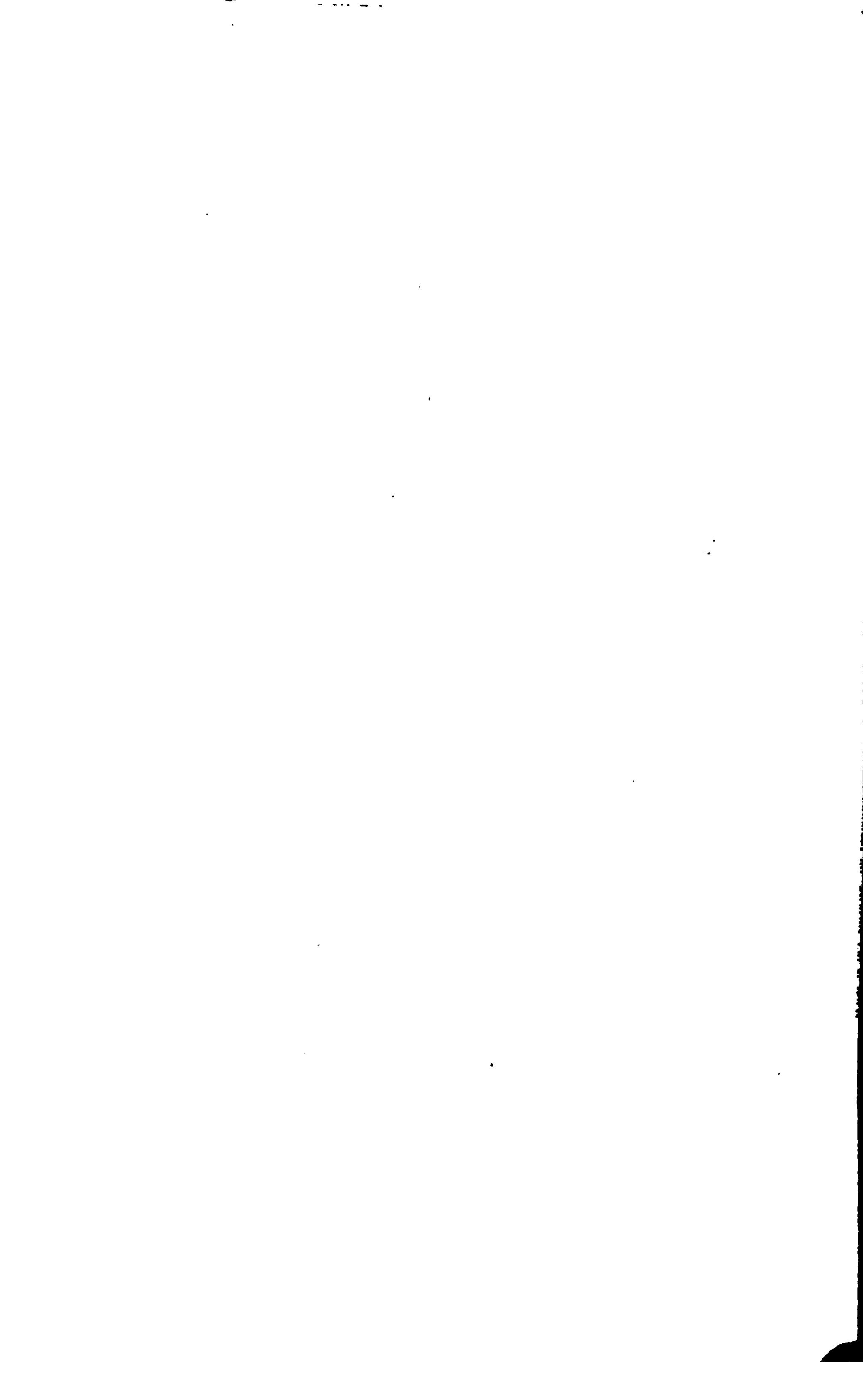
'Wait about here till it pleases her to come and give me her orders! Not for the highest lady in Christendom would I do it, and I'm sure I shan't for her. She may give her orders to the cook, and welcome. I don't stir out of my bed for any one until I'm inclined to do it. And not sit down in her presence, indeed! I must speak to the Colonel about this. Matters must be settled between the Colonel and me before this day closes.'

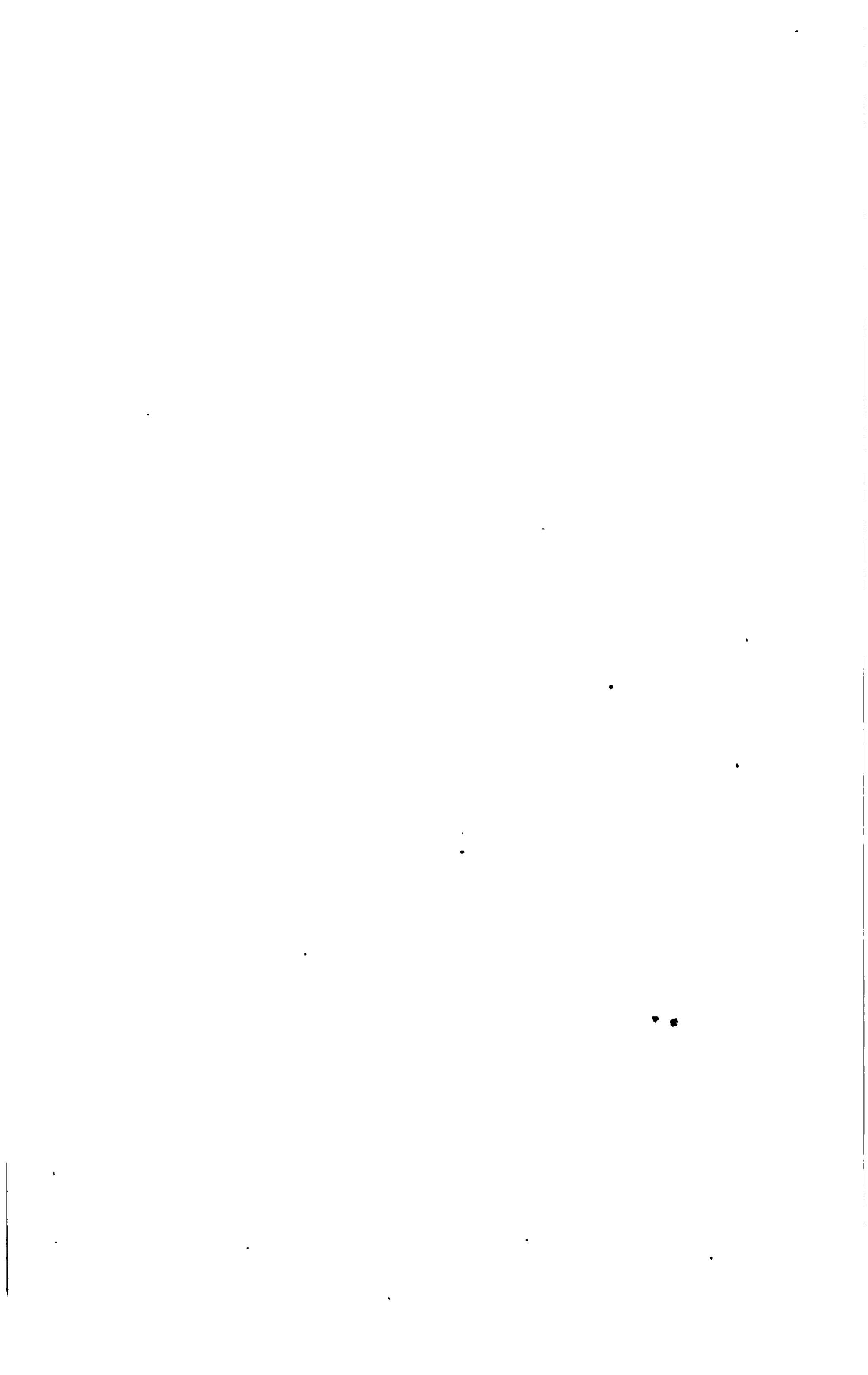
And so, in truth, they must have been, to judge from the forlorn and hump-backed appearance with which the Colonel enters his wife's dressing-room that evening before retiring to bed. He has passed a very happy day, for Irene has not confided the little domestic troubles of the morning to him; she has thought that she will fight the ignoble battle by herself, and that no servant will presume to make a few quietly-spoken words of caution a pretext for appealing to her master's judgment; but she is mistaken. Colonel Mordaunt has been enduring a very stormy half hour in that study of his before making his escape upstairs, and the vision of a peaceful married life has fled before it like a dream. He comes up to Irene's side, looking quite fagged and worn-out, and older by ten years than he did in the morning. She notices it at once.

'My dear Philip, how tired you must be! You have been exerting yourself too much after our long journey yesterday.'

'I am only worried, my darling. What is this row between you and Quekett? I did so hope you would have been able to get on with the old woman.'

'Has she been complaining to you?'





'She came into my study just now—she has been used to have a talk with me occasionally in the evenings—and told me what had happened. She is very much put out about it, naturally.'

'So was I put out about it—naturally! But I didn't immediately bring my troubles to you, Philip, though I conclude I have more right to your sympathy than a servant can have.'

'How did it happen?'

'Nothing happened. If Mrs. Quekett is vexed—which she did not intimate to me—I suppose it is because I told her I intended to give the household orders in future. I dare say she has had a great deal of liberty; but that kind of thing can't go on when a man marries.'

'Of course not—and I hope she will come round to see it in that light after a time. But she says she would rather you gave your orders to the cook instead of her. You won't mind that, will you?'

'Not at all—I shall prefer it; for, to tell you the truth, I don't quite like your Mrs. Quekett, Philip; her manners are too familiar and assuming to please me.'

'Remember how long she has been with us; old servants are apt to forget themselves sometimes.'

'Do you think so? My mother had a lady's-maid who had been with her since her marriage, and only left us for a home of her own; she never addressed me except by name, nor thought of sitting down in my presence, though she had known me from my birth.'

Colonel Mordaunt grows fidgetty.

'Well, dear, I think the best way will be for you and Quekett to see as little of one another as possible. She has been accustomed to a great deal of consideration from us (rather more, perhaps, than the occasion warrants), and I dare say she does feel a little jealous, as

you suggested, of your coming here, and monopolising all the attention. But it will wear off by-and-by. Don't you think so?'—wistfully.

'I don't understand servants being jealous of their mistresses, Philip. But if Mrs. Quekett and I are not to meet, what is the use of our keeping her? After all, I shan't want a housekeeper. Let her go.'

But at this piece of rank blasphemy her husband looks almost horrified.

'My dear child, do you know what you are talking about? Why, she has been with us for the last thirty years.'

'No reason she should remain thirty more. I don't like her, Philip, and I never shall.'

'Hush! Pray don't say that. I am sure you will grow to like her.'

'I am sure I shan't.'

'You have not had a proper opportunity yet of judging of her character.'

'I have seen quite enough of it. If I were superstitious, Philip, I should think that woman possessed the evil eye—at all events for me.'

'What nonsense, my darling! I thought you were too clever to talk like that. Why, if Quekett were to leave Fen Court I should think the whole house was going to topple down on our heads!'

'And so you wouldn't get rid of her, even for me?' whispers Irene, with the most insinuating of upward glances.

'What is there I wouldn't do for you?' her husband answers; and for a few moments delivers himself up to the charm of realising that he has secured the desire of his heart. But when he leaves her to herself again, the cloud returns to his brow, and his soul is disquieted within him. He feels that he is living on a volcano which is even now trembling be-

neath his feet, and may at any moment erupt in flames of malice and revenge which shall bring destruction in their train. His life is scarcely more enviable than that of Eric Keir. Each man walks the world with a heavy secret in his breast.

It is August. The harvest is nearly all gathered in, and every one is looking forward to September. Irene has issued her first invitations for the shooting season: one to her aunt, Mrs. Cavendish, and her daughter Mary, another to Mr. Pettingall—who is most anxious to see his young friend in her new position—and a third to some bachelor acquaintances of her husband's, whom Colonel Mordaunt assures her she will find delightful. In fact, the house is to be full; and Irene is quite excited at the prospect of entertaining so many guests. She flits about from room to room, followed by the meek Isabella, and issuing her orders without the slightest regard to the feelings of the great Mrs. Quekett. Not that Irene has forgotten Mrs. Quekett during the past month, or forgiven her. The mere fact of the housekeeper's refusal to receive her orders serves to keep her memory alive in her mistress's bosom and to make the intercourse between them purely nominal. Together they are frigidly polite to one another; and apart they are determinately hostile. Irene has ceased to make any comment on the housekeeper's behaviour or to express any desire for her dismissal; she has seen and heard enough during her residence at Fen Court to convince her that to pursue either course is futile, but she does what is far more galling to Mrs. Quekett's pride—she ignores her presence altogether. She makes no calls

upon her duty: she neither blames nor praises her—she simply acts as though there were no such person in the house. So Rebecca Quekett continues to lie abed until noon, and to feed off the best of the land, and to twist her master round her little finger; but the servants no longer tremble at her presence; she has lost the absolute authority she held over them—she has been transformed from a captious tyrant into an injured but faithful servitor; and she takes good care to drum the fact into the Colonel's ears, and to hate the one who has brought about the change. Yet little does Irene reck her annoyance or her hate; she considers the presence of the housekeeper at Fen Court as an intolerable nuisance, and often wonders how her husband, who can be so firm in some things, should be so weak in this; but consoles herself with the idea that no lot in this world is entirely without its annoyances, and that she might have encountered a worse skeleton in the closet than Mrs. Quekett. Whether the Colonel would have agreed with her it is impossible to say. And so we bring them up to the latter days of August.

One morning Colonel Mordaunt receives a letter which seems greatly to disturb him.

'What is the matter, Philip?' demands Irene.

'Nothing that concerns you, my darling! — nothing, in fact, at all.'

Yet he sits, with knitted brows, brooding over the contents of the epistle during the rest of breakfast, and reads it through three or four times before the meal is concluded. As Irene leaves the room, he calls his sister to his side.

'Isabella, I am greatly annoyed. Here is a letter from Oliver. He has heard of an opening for a practice somewhere in this neighbour-

hood, and proposes coming down to speak to me about it.'

'He can't expect to stay here,' says Miss Mordaunt—'at least I should hardly think so—there will not be room for him, you know. The house will be full next week.'

'If he sleeps at the inn it will be all the same. I don't want Irene and him to meet.'

'Have you never mentioned Oliver to her, then?' demands his sister, timidly.

'Cursorily I may, though I doubt if she will remember it. But it is not that, Isabella. You know well enough that if I introduce young Ralston to Irene it will be difficult to explain why I don't ask him to the Court.'

'And you think he might not come. It is nearly a year since he has been here.'

'Good God! You have not the slightest perception. If Oliver comes here, he must see Quekett; and you know they never meet without a disturbance of some sort; and in her present state of feeling towards Irene I couldn't risk it. There is no knowing what she might not say.'

'Then, what do you propose to do?'

'Put off Oliver till Quekett goes to town. If she were away, I should have no fear. Doesn't she intend to pay her usual visit to Lady What's-her-name this autumn?'

'I don't know—I am almost afraid she doesn't. I was speaking to her about it yesterday; but she has not been herself at all lately—she's quite—crotchety,' says Miss Mordaunt; as though crotchetiness were an entirely new phase in Mrs. Quekett's character.

'Means to stay here on purpose, I suppose, because she knows we want the house to ourselves. Isabella, I often wish I had taken Irene abroad again. I question whether it would not be worth my

while to take up a residence there, even now. She likes continental life, and I—well, any life almost would be preferable to this. I live in constant dread of an explosion.'

'Wouldn't it'—commences Miss Mordaunt, timidly—'wouldn't it be better, Philip—of course you know best—but still I can't help thinking—'

'What?—what?' he interrupts, impatiently.

'That if you were to tell her—'

'Irene!'—the colour fades out of Colonel Mordaunt's face at the bare idea—'to tell Irene? Why, Isabella, you must be mad to think of it!'

* * * *

They are engaged out to a dinner-party that evening; a very grand dinner-party given by Sir Samuel and Lady Grimstone, who live at Calverley Park, about twelve miles from Priestley, and consider themselves of so much importance that they never even left their cards at Fen Court until they heard that the owner had brought home a wife to do the honours there. For, although Colonel Mordaunt, as master of the Priestley foxhounds, holds an important position in the county, and is on visiting terms with the best houses in the neighbourhood, his poor meek sister has hitherto been completely overlooked.

'A single woman, my dear!'—as Lady Grimstone remarked, when giving lessons on the inexpediency of forming useless acquaintances, to her newly-married daughter, Mrs. Eustace Lennox Jones—'a single woman, in order to gain a passport to society, should be either beautiful, accomplished, or clever. If she can look handsome, or sing well, or talk smartly, she amuses your other guests; if not, she only fills up the place of a better person. Nothing is to be

had for nothing in this world; and we must work for our social as well as our daily bread.'

'But, why then, mamma,' demanded, on that occasion, Mrs. Eustace Lennox Jones, 'do you invite Lady Arabella Vane? I am sure she is neither young, beautiful, nor witty; and yet you made up a party expressly for her last time she was in Priestley.'

'Oh, my dear! you forget how wealthy she is, and how well connected. With three unmarried girls on my hands, I could never afford to give up the *entrée* of her house in town. Besides, she has brothers! No, my dear Everilda, learn where to draw the line. The great secret of success in forming an agreeable circle of acquaintances is to exclude the useless of either sex.'

* * * *

And so poor Miss Mordaunt has been excluded hitherto as utterly useless, as in good truth she is; but my Lady Grimstone has been obliged to include her in the invitation to the bride and bridegroom. A young and pretty bride, fresh from the hands of the best society and a first-rate milliner, is no mean acquisition at a country dinner-table; better than if she were unmarried, especially where there are three daughters still to dispose of. And the useless single woman must needs come in her train. It is a great event to Isabella, though she is almost too shy to enjoy the prospect, and the kindness with which Irene has helped and advised her concerning her dress for the occasion has made her feel more inwardly indignant against Mrs. Quekett, and more afraid of that amiable creature's tongue than she has ever been before. Colonel Mordaunt, too, who expects to meet several influential supporters of his fa-

vourite pursuit, has been looking forward to the evening with unusual pleasure and with great pride, at the thought of introducing his young wife to his old friends; he is all the more disappointed, therefore, when, after a long day spent in the harvest fields, he returns home to find Irene lying down with a face as white as chalk, and a pain in her head so acute that she cannot open her eyes to the light, nor speak beyond a few words at a time.

'It is so stupid of me,' she murmurs, in reply to his expressions of concern; 'but I am sure it will go off by-and-by.'

Isabella brings her strong tea, and she sits up and forces herself to swallow it, and feels as though her head would burst before thefeat were accomplished.

'I think it must be the sun,' she says, in explanation to her husband. 'I felt it very hot upon my head this afternoon, and the pain came on directly afterwards. Don't worry yourself about it, Philip; we need not start till six. I have a full hour in which to rest myself, and I am sure to be better before it is time to dress.'

When that important moment arrives, she staggers to her feet, and attempts to go through the process of adornment; but her heart is stouter than her limbs; before it is half completed, she is seized with a deadly sickness and faintness, which prove beyond doubt that she is quite unfit for any further exertion that night; and reluctantly she is obliged to confess that she thinks she had better remain at home.

'How I wish I could stay with you!' says her husband, who is quite put out of conceit with the coming entertainment by the knowledge that she cannot accompany him; 'but I suppose it would

never do for us all to turn defaulters.'

'Assuredly not,' says Irene. 'You will enjoy it when you get there, Philip, and I shall do very well here, lying on the sofa with Phœbe to look after me, and most likely be quite recovered by the time you return. That is the annoying part of these sudden attacks. You generally begin to revive at the very moment when it is too late to do so.'

'Anyway, I couldn't take you as you are now,' replies Colonel Mordaunt, 'for you look perfectly ghastly.' Well, I suppose it is time we should be off. Bother these stupid dinners! Isabella, are you ready? Phœbe, take good care of your mistress. *Au revoir, my darling.*' And with that he steps into the carriage with his sister, and they drive away to Calverley Park. So my Lady Grimstone, much to her ladyship's disgust, only gets her 'useless single woman,' after all.

* * * *

'I am much better,' says Irene, two hours after, as she opens her eyes at the entrance of her maid. 'What o'clock is it, Phœbe? have I been asleep?'

'It's close upon half-past seven, ma'am; and you've been asleep for more than two hours. I was that pleased when I heard you snore: I was sure it would do you good.'

'How romantic!' laughs her mistress; 'but I suppose one may be excused for snoring, when one's head is a mass of pain and buried under three sofa cushions. What a tumbled heap I have been lying in; and I feel as confused as though I had been asleep, like Rip Van Winkle, for a hundred years. What is that you have there, Phœbe? Coffee! Give it me without milk or sugar. It is the very thing I wanted. And throw

that window wide open. Ah! what a heavenly coolness! It is like breathing new life.'

'Let me fetch your brush, ma'am, and brush through your hair. You'll feel ever so much better after that! I know so well what these headaches as come from the sun are. Your head is just bursting for an hour or two, and you feels as sick as sick; and then of a sudden it all goes off and leaves you weak like; but well—'

'That is just it, Phœbe,' says Irene, smiling at the graphic description; 'and all that I want to set me up again is a little fresh air. Make me tidy, and give me my hat, and I will try what a turn in the garden will do for me. No; don't attempt to put it up; my head is far too tender for that; and I shall see no one.'

So, robed in a soft muslin dress, with her fair hair floating over her shoulders, and her garden-hat swinging in her hand, Irene goes down the staircase, rather staggeringly at first, but feeling less giddy with each step she takes, and out into the Fen Court garden. She turns towards the shrubbery, partly because it is sequestered, and partly because there are benches there on which she loves to sit and listen to the nightingales singing in the plantation beyond.

It is a very still evening; although the sun has so long gone down. Scarcely the voice of bird or insect is to be heard, and the rich August flowers hang their heads as though the heat had burned all their sweetness out of them, and they had no power left wherewith to scent the air. But to Irene, risen from a feverish couch, the stillness and the calm seem doubly grateful; and as she saunters along, silently and slowly, for she feels unequal to making

much exertion, her footsteps leave no sound behind them.

She enters the shrubbery, which is thick and situated at some little distance from the house, and walks towards her favourite tree, an aged holly, which shelters a very comfortable modern bench of iron. What is her surprise, on reaching the spot, to find it is not at her disposal? The figure of a man, with the back of his head towards her, is stretched very comfortably the length of the seat, whilst he pours forth volumes of smoke from a meerschaum in front.

Irene's first thought is to beat a retreat: is not her back hair guiltless of ribbon, net, or comb? But the surprise occasioned by encountering a stranger where she least expected to do so has elicited a little 'Oh!' from her, which has caught his ear. He looks round, leaps off the seat, and in another moment is standing before her, very red in the face, with his wide-awake in his hand, and his meerschaum smoking away all by itself on the shrubbery bench.

Both feel they ought to say something, and neither knows which should begin first. As usual, in most cases of difficulty, Woman wins the day.

'Pray don't let me disturb you,' she commences, though without the least idea if he has any right there. 'I am only taking a little walk through the shrubbery; you need not move!'

'It is I that should apologise for trespassing, although I am not aware to whom I have the pleasure of speaking,' he answers, and then stops, waiting for a clue to her identity. He is a good, honest-looking young fellow, of three or four and twenty, with bright, blue eyes, and hair of the colour usually called 'sandy'; not very distinguished in appearance, perhaps, which idea is strengthened,

at first sight, by the rough style of dress in which he is attired, and the 'horsey' look about his breast-pin, tie, and watch-chain. And yet there is something in the face that is turned towards her (notwithstanding that an inflamed look about the eyes and cheekbones tells tales of a fast life); something of respectful admiration for herself, and delicacy lest he should have offended by his presence, that wins Irene's liking, even at this very early stage of her acquaintance with him.

'Perhaps you know Colonel Mordaunt, or were waiting here to see him,' she goes on somewhat hurriedly; 'but he is not at home this evening.'

'I do know Colonel Mordaunt,' replies the stranger, 'and that he is from home. But, excuse me, is it possible I can be addressing Mrs. Mordaunt?'

'I am Mrs. Mordaunt,' says Irene, simply.

'My uncle's wife!'

'Your uncle! Is my husband your uncle?' In her surprise she moves a few steps nearer him. 'But what, then, is your name?'

'Oliver Ralston; at your service, madam,' he answers, laughing.

'Ralston! oh, of course, I have heard Philip speak of you. I remember it distinctly now; but it was some time ago. I am very glad to see you. How do you do?'

And then they shake hands and say 'How do you do?' to each other in the absurd and aimless manner we are wont to use on meeting, although we know quite well how each one 'does' before our mouths are opened.

'But why did you not come to the house, Mr. Ralston?' continues Irene presently. 'I do not think Colonel Mordaunt had any idea of your arrival. He has gone with his sister to dine at the Grim-

stones. I should have gone too, except for a racking headache.'

'It is evident you have not heard much about me, Mrs. Mordaunt, or you would be aware that I have not the free run of Fen Court that you seem to imagine.'

'Of your own uncle's house! What nonsense! I never could believe that. But why, then, are you in the shrubbery?'

'I will tell you frankly, if you will permit me. I am an orphan, and have been under the guardianship of my uncle ever since I was a baby. I am a medical student also, and have held the post of house surgeon at one of the London hospitals for some time. London doesn't agree with me, morally or physically, and I have a great desire to get some practice in the country. I heard of something that might suit me near Priestley, yesterday, and wrote to my uncle concerning it. Afterwards I was told, if I wished for success, I must lose no time in looking after the business myself. So I ran down this morning and put up at the "Dog and Fox," and, as I heard the Fen Court people were all going out to Calverley Park to dinner (indeed, the carriage passed me as I was loitering about the lanes, some two hours since), I thought I might venture to intrude so far as to smoke my pipe on one of the shrubbery benches. This is a true and particular confession, Mrs. Mordaunt, and I hope, after hearing it, that you will acquit the prisoner of malice prepense in intruding on your solitude.'

But she is not listening to him.

'At the "Dog and Fox!"' she answers; 'that horridly low little place in the middle of the village! And for Colonel Mordaunt's nephew! I never heard of such a thing. I am sure your uncle will

be exceedingly vexed when you tell him. And Fen Court with a dozen bedrooms—why, it is enough to make all Priestley talk.'

'Indeed, it was the best thing I could do—my uncle had not invited me here; and, as I told you before, I am not sufficiently a favourite to be able to run in and out just as I choose.'

'Then I invite you, Mr. Ralston—I am mistress of Fen Court; and in the absence of my husband I beg you will consider yourself as my guest. We will go back to the house together.'

'But, Mrs. Mordaunt, you are too good—but you do not know—you do not understand—I am afraid my uncle will be vexed ——'

'He will not be vexed with anything I choose to do, Mr. Ralston; but if he is vexed at this, I am quite sure I shall be vexed with him. Come, at all events, and have some supper, and wait up with me for his return. Come!'

She beckons him with an inclination of her head as she utters the last word, and he is fain to follow her. They pass through the shrubberies and garden, and take a turn or two down the drive, and have grown quite friendly and familiar with one another (as young people brought together, with any excuse to be so, soon become) by the time they reach the house again.

'Of course I am your aunt!' Irene is saying, as the porch comes in view; 'and you must call me so. I feel quite proud of having such a big nephew. I shall degenerate into an old twaddler by-and-by, like poor Miss Higgins, who is always talking of "my nevvy the captain"—"my nevvy the doctor" will sound very well, won't it? particularly if you'll promise to be a real one, with M.D. after your name.'

'If anything could induce me to shake myself free of the natural indolence that encumbers me,' he is answering, and rather gravely, 'it would be the belief that some one like yourself was good enough to take an interest in my career ——' when, straight in the path before them, they encounter Mrs. Quekett, who, with a light shawl cast over her cap, has come out to enjoy the evening air.

Irene is passing on, without so much as a smile or an inclination of her head by way of recognition. She has received so much covert impertinence at Mrs. Quekett's hands, that she is not disposed to place herself in the way of more; and the very sight of the house-keeper is obnoxious to her. But Mrs. Quekett has no intention of permitting herself to be so slighted. At the first sight of Oliver Ralston she started, but by the time they meet upon the gravelled path she has laid her plans.

'Good evening, ma'am!' she commences, with forced courtesy to her so-called mistress, and then turns to her companion. 'Well, Master Oliver! who would have thought of seeing you here? I am sure the Colonel has no expectations of your coming.'

'I dare say not, Mrs. Quekett; he could hardly have, considering I had not time to write and inform him of my arrival.'

'And how will he like it, Master Oliver, when he does hear it, eh? He's not over-pleased in general to be taken by surprise.'

Here Irene, who cannot help saying what she feels, injudiciously puts in her oar.

'It can be no concern of yours, Quekett, what Colonel Mordaunt thinks or does not think, nor can your opinion, I imagine, be of much value to Mr. Ralston. He will sleep here to-night; see that the Green Room is prepared for him.'

'When the Colonel gives orders for it I will, ma'am; but you will excuse me for saying that Mr. Oliver has never been put in the Green Room yet, and I don't expect that he will be.'

'You will excuse me for saying, Mrs. Quekett,' retorts Irene, now fairly roused, 'that, as I am mistress of Fen Court, and you are the housekeeper, you will prepare any room for my guests that I may choose to select for their accommodation.'

'I take my orders from the Colonel,' replies the woman, in a quietly insolent manner; 'and as for the Green Room, it was always kept for *gentlemen* in my time, and I don't expect that the Colonel will choose to make any alterations now to what it was then.' And so stumped past them.

* * * * *

Irene is violently agitated—her face grows livid—her hands turn cold. She drags Oliver after her into the Fen Court dining-room, and there turns round on him with a vehemence that alarms him, lest they should be overheard.

'Mr. Ralston!—you know this place—you know your uncle—you have known them all for years. Tell me, for Heaven's sake, *what is the reason that that woman is permitted to behave towards us as she does?*

W. Redfern.

THE BAD HALF-CROWN.

A TALE OF BAFFLED VILLAINY, REPENTANCE, AND BENEVOLENCE.

VOL. XXII.—NO. CXXXVII.

2 H

AT THE ACADEMY.

"TIS May once more. I fear 'tis almost treason
 To call it sunny, charming, bright, or fair,
 Or other graceful name, while we've such reason
 To recollect of late its blighting air.
 But May it is ; and the gay London season,
 Like time and tide, that neither wait nor care
 For mortal man, is nearly at its height,
 And, fair or dull the skies, makes all things bright.

'Tis May indeed, as truly should we know
 When ope the doors of Burlington's fair halls,
 Art's noble temple, and to Art's great show,
 Whose beauty never satiates nor palls,
 London Society gaily throngs, although
 Much as it goes to weddings, routs, or balls ;
 Some merely for it haps to be the fashion,
 Some just to cultivate the tender passion.

Wherefore these go, if not for Art's sweet sake,
 Is unto us a question too profound ;
 Enough for us our gladsome way to take
 To that rich feast, that doth for us abound
 With such delights as pleasant memories wake,
 As pictures, like old friends, our view surround.
 Old favourites these, in whom we fondly trace
 Each well-known charm, or some fresh fairer grace.

There's Millais : with what joy our senses thrill
 As flushes his warm canvas on our sight !
 What wealth of beauty here, what subtle skill
 In colour, texture, contrasts, shade and light !
 Do flowing rivers, autumn aspects chill,
 Or graceful girls in sheeny satins dight,
 Portraits of ancient dames, or children dear,
 Engage his pencil, who shall name his peer ?

Next, graceful Leslie, all pure classic taste,
 All tender loveliness of form and hue,
 Delicious beauty, delicate and chaste,
 Soft sunshine sweet spring foliage stealing through ;
 Whose canvases are pictured idylls, graced
 With all that painter's skill, and poet's too,
 Combined, can lend to furnish forth his theme,
 On which who gazes once must ever dream.

Who claims us next—Frith, Landseer, Stone, or Ward ?
 Or classic Leighton, Armitage, or Cooke ?
 Or trip we with Frost's nymphs o'er sand or sward,
 Or seek with Lee some cool sequestered nook,
 Where crystal stream and leafy shades concord ?
 Or ope with Vicat Cole fair Nature's book,
 And gaze on landscapes warm with 'autumn gold,'
 Or peaceful vales, that evening's mists enfold ?

Yet more with Nature's works would we commune,
See, Mutrie's flowers might make the very bees
Take them for sun-kissed children of warm June,
While Stannard's fruits for truth may vie with these.
Then Cooper's streams and pastures, 'neath the noon
Of summer sleeping, lulled by lambent breeze,
Carry us back to some remembered day,
When we amid such scenes were wont to stray.

'Mong kindred scenes to linger still awhile,
With Ansdell's flocks and herds we'll briefly rest,
What time the shepherds with their pipes beguile
Their tranquil watch ; then on with Hook, in quest
Of some bright sea-coast gem of our sweet isle ;
Or dip with Dell in some green sylvan nest ;
Or hover, wonder and delight between,
O'er Whistler's 'symphonies in gray and green.'

Still on we wend where Prinsep's maidens lure
With their sweet witcheries ; to these a kiss
We waft as chaste as their own beauty pure ;
Nor thy fair virgins, Boughton, must we miss.
Next, Horsley's bashful swains and maids demure
Tempt us a while to muse upon their bliss ;
While the same story, Storey, perhaps, will tell,
And many a brush will o'er the soft theme dwell.

Time presses now, and still there's more to see
Before the soft spring light fades out and dies—
Such Goodall's scenes of sacred history,
Such Thorburn's angels, beautiful and wise,
Such Frère's school-children, sporting in pure glee,
And Long's dark maidens, ripe'd 'neath southern skies ;
Faed's homely scenes of simple cares and joys,
And Nicol's canny Scots and 'broths of boys.'

They come, and still they come, but all too late ;
No more can bear our strained and dazzled sight ;
Here nymphs with tenderest graces fascinate,
And sweet cool bits of colour there invite ;
Though tales whose pathos makes our hearts vibrate,
And soft effects of warm or chastened light
Entice us to the very last to stay,
We can no more but loving farewell say.

To thee, O ART, our grateful love and praise,
For much we owe to thee, O influence kind,
Who dost so gently move men's hearts, and raise
Alike the cultured and the untutored mind
From sordid things, from dark and earthly ways,
To aspirations pure and thoughts refined.
Poets may sing and authors prose or preach,
But none like thee, O fairest ART, can teach.

H. C. S.

THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

A REAL POLITICAL CRISIS—RAILWAY ACCIDENTS—THE COAL FAMINE—WIDOWERS AND SISTERS-IN-LAW AGAIN—THE TABLEAUX AT CROMWELL HOUSE—THE 'HAPPY LAND' AND THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN—THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS—THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DRAMA.

IT really was quite a new sensation to experience in the middle of last March a real political crisis. We have been so accustomed to see Messrs. Gladstone, Lowe, Cardwell, and Co., in their usual places, that we found it extremely difficult to realise the fact that they might possibly be compelled to give way for others. Even the most Conservative of us felt a pang at thinking that we should miss the well-known faces on the foremost Treasury bench. Mr. Gladstone's government, in fact, will soon become a part of the Constitution, and we shall be as much afraid of shaking it as we shall be terrified at touching the Law of Entails. The present Cabinet bids fair to become a national institution; and as it has outlived the *fiasco* of the Irish University Bill, why should it not jog along in its Happy Land for many years to come? But, still, we never know what may happen. Another defeat upon some trivial subject will bring about something more than a crisis—a catastrophe. The once most popular Liberal Government may not improbably find that the persevering crotchetts of one or two leading members of the existing Cabinet may land it in a disaster which it will take a long time to get over. Men who have been in power for some time are apt to forget the title by which they hold their position, and are not unnaturally disposed to regard that position as their right. From the moment that any such notion becomes apparent the principle of their autho-

rity is undermined; and while they build up higher and higher they entirely forget to consider the frail basis of their superstructure. The Talk of the Town is often wrong in its prognostications, but there are occasions when its instinct is infallible; and I am bound to say that I shall be much surprised if it turns out to be wrong in its assurance that the present Government is doomed, and that the days of its holding office are now distinctly numbered. The sentiments which made Mr. Gladstone leap across the Rubicon of Irish Ultramontanism are not easy of explanation; and if we cannot say that he has exactly leaped back again, we may, at all events, congratulate him that he did not burn all his ships. But whatever may be the ultimate fate of the present Government, the true friends of education may feel happy in the thought that the defeat of that Government in March—no matter by what crooked means it was brought about—is of the greatest importance in affirming the principle that in the matter of national education all individual and party predilections must be put on one side, and that the youthful citizens of the empire must be satisfactorily educated, in spite of the warfare of theological controversy. FREE LANCE does not hesitate to state his opinion that the Church of England has taken its part in the education of the masses in a noble and large-hearted manner; and he further feels quite sure that if the Secularist platform were established to-morrow the

Anglican communion would not in the result be a loser. But, putting that point aside, he is bound to state another conviction, and that is, that when a great principle is at stake it is impossible to have a detailed scheme for one portion of the British Isles and a wholly different one for another. Let Mr. Gladstone for once own that he has made a mistake, and he may honourably retrace his steps. Let him leave Romanism and Protestantism to fight their own battles, but let him insist that the Irish peasantry shall be *taught* in all those matters which give youth a proper appreciation of its moral responsibilities and a knowledge of the world in which it is growing up; and religious polemicists may come in as best they may, and give their bias wherever it will be received with confidence. So long as Christendom is as unhappily divided as it is, this is the only true statesmanlike course; and we may rest assured that truth will never suffer from the results. The fate of Mr. Gladstone's Irish University Bill is pregnant with consequences we can hardly realise as yet, but they will become more demonstrably apparent as time goes on. Let justice be done though the heavens fall; but we may be confident that serene and impartial justice done in the matter of educating the simple, but hot-headed Irish folk will not shake the heavens, but only dissipate the storm-clouds which so long have worried our genial neighbours.

On the whole we may, perhaps, congratulate ourselves on the comparatively small number of railway accidents which have occurred during the recent winter months. We cannot, of course, expect perfect immunity from danger; but

we are strongly impressed with an idea, which we believe to be a correct one, that railway directors might, if they tried very hard, insure us a more plenteous peace of mind than we dare to boast of at present. Having regard to the ordinary character of railway accidents, we may state generally that a goods train, or some trifling portion of it—say an engine and tender, as in the Taplow accident—is usually found to be the proximate cause; and we cannot but reiterate the inquiry whether it is absolutely impossible for the companies to construct a third line of rails, upon which the goods traffic may be worked. No doubt such an arrangement would be expensive at first, and would be especially awkward with reference to bridges and tunnels; yet we cannot but think that engineering skill will rise equal to the occasion; and, after all, human life is worth a little expense and temporary inconvenience. Whether such an arrangement would bring about the desired result we cannot say for certain, as there seems to be no end to the ingenuity with which accidents are brought about; but, at all events, we may safely say that it would considerably narrow the individual responsibility.

Summer is once more nearly upon us, and in the burst of spring we are beginning to forget all that we have suffered during the winter in discharging the formidable bills presented by our coal-merchant. It is sincerely to be hoped that coal-consumers, however ample their means may be, will not be content with merely grumbling, but will make common cause with those whose incomes have been sadly disarranged by the high prices that have recently prevailed, and that

such a combination will be formed as will effectually prevent a repetition of the forced markets to which we have been led unwilling victims. I won't say anything about a Coal 'Ring.' The virtuous merchants who have written to the daily journals, and given vent to their honest indignation at the circulation of such a scandal, must, of course, command my unhesitating belief; but some of us are beginning to ask whether we cannot do without the coal-merchant as well as without the grocer. The principles of co-operation, in short, will have to be extended; and the colliers will have to be paid by the results of their labour. Householders may rely upon it that the remedy for their grievance is in their own hands; and the original promoters of trades-unions will perhaps be somewhat astonished as they watch the development of their ideas; and they will find that the combination and organisation to which they so blindly trusted can be successfully imitated by the public whom they serve.

Last month I referred briefly to the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, and anticipated its rejection in the House of Lords. I am glad to be able to say that the result of the division has proved the correctness of my perception. Into the merits of the question I do not intend to enter again; I merely desire to record the surprise that has been occasioned in the minds of many excellent persons by the fact that certain Roman Catholic peers voted in favour of the measure. It is well known to the most superficial student of theology that the Roman Church regards matrimony as a sacrament, and, *prima facie*, considers the union of a man with his sis-

ter-in-law as an incestuous alliance. The difficulty may, however, be overcome by procuring an ecclesiastical dispensation; and a 'Catholic Priest' writes to the 'Times,' and boasts that he has been concerned in the obtaining several such dispensations, and congratulates himself and his clients upon the fact that such dispensations have been obtained free of charge. Now this statement demands something more than a mere passing notice. Whether dispensations are actually paid for in hard cash, or not, is not of much consequence; we know pretty well that they are not more likely to be procured gratis than is a decree in Chancery; but in the matter of such a marriage the moral of a dispensation becomes a fit subject for consideration. It is either morally wrong for a widower to marry his sister-in-law, or it is not wrong. If it is wrong, if it is contrary to morals, to the welfare of society, to the Divine Law, that mind must be cast in a most curious mould that can allow the power of any dispensation in such cases. Nothing, more probably, in those dark ages of the Christian Church which were so hopelessly Cimmerian in their gloom, could have dulled consciences to all moral truth so fatally as the papal system of dispensations. It is not too much to say that popes claimed the power of dispensing with the binding qualities of oaths, political leagues, the allegiance of subjects to their sovereigns, the sanctity of marriage vows—nay, with the very laws of God, nature, and man. Can we be surprised that even in days when the Church of England was in formal communion with the Pope an Act of Parliament branded the papal dispensations as 'the rending and destruction of the Communion'

Law of the land'? If anybody doubts my assertion, I refer him to the Statute of Provisors passed in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Edward III., and he will find the justification of my statement. And we can now arrive at the motive which induced the Roman Catholic peers to vote for an alteration in the existing law. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is unquestionably forbidden in the Roman Church. But a dispensation for the performance of such a marriage may be granted. Now if the law of the land condemns such marriages, no papal dispensation can possibly give the offending parties any social status, or confer legitimacy upon the offspring of such an union; consequently, the dispensation is, for all practical purposes, absolutely worthless, and therefore in England seldom asked for. Alter the law, and the dispensations will immediately assume a value which they do not now possess. Hence we may unreservedly accept the statement made by a 'Catholic Priest' in the 'Times,' that dispensations to marry a deceased wife's sister cost nothing; because, so long as the law of England is unchanged, such dispensations are simply valueless. It is not necessary, perhaps, to inquire further into the motive of the Roman Catholic vote upon this occasion.

It is always pleasant to see proverbs verified, and the truth of the adage that 'extremes meet' is witnessed to by the fact that the most Protestant of Anglican Prelates, the Bishop of Ripon, also voted in favour of the Bill. His lordship, however, lacked the wisdom of the serpent, and his emotions betrayed him into the folly of giving the reasons for his vote. The logical acumen of this eminent ecclesiastic may be valued

from the fact that he positively argued that the law ought to be altered because in its present state several people were compelled to live together in a state of immorality. That is to say, the law ought to be altered in order to sanction vice. I must say the right reverend prelate must have felt extremely uncomfortable when the Lord Chancellor, in vigorously opposing the Bill, made certain severe comments upon the probable effect in the diocese of Ripon of the publication of its chief pastor's moral themes.

I ought not to neglect to say a word or two about the 'Tableaux Vivants' that were represented in the theatre of Cromwell House some few weeks ago, as they were for the time decidedly the 'Talk of the Town.' While I may unhesitatingly affirm that they were very good, I may as unhesitatingly assert that I have seen better. Considering the grand scale on which they were 'got up,' and the artistic experience which assisted in their production, those who came to criticise might perhaps have been not unreasonably disappointed; those, however, who may merely have come to see a sight which is not of every day occurrence were certainly quite satisfied with their entertainment. Such performances, indeed, are not amenable to criticism, and therefore I am content to single out for my warmest praise the tableaux representing 'The Retreat from Moscow,' 'The Children in the Tower,' 'Mabuse in his Studio,' 'Semiramis,' and 'Ginevra.' All these pictures were extremely pretty, and I may say that the figure of 'Semiramis' almost reached the sublime. The only fault I have to find is that all resembled the tableaux of the theatre more than the work of the

painter. The thick gauze which is generally used on the Continent in these representations did not seem to be in favour with the managers, and its effect was consequently lost. It was also to be regretted that the representatives of the various characters were not at all shy of mingling with the spectators before their turn came on, and therefore there was not that novelty about their appearance on the stage which was decidedly desirable.

There is a sort of antiquarian interest attaching to the energetic action of the Lord Chamberlain, displayed in his prompt interference with the liberty of certain histrionic performers who in the month of March ventured to present themselves before the public in the guise of three tolerably well-known public men. The interference, which might under other circumstances have been rudely resented, has been tolerated as something unique in its way, if it has not been universally approved of. It has been argued that if you may write your opinion of a public man as strongly as you please in the columns of the daily and weekly journals, and may make him the victim of the most cutting remarks and keenest satire, without any fear of penal consequences so long as no absolute personal malice is displayed, surely you may, in a good-humoured manner, caricature the same public man upon the boards of a theatre in the course of a burlesque representation of modern politics. Not so, it is warmly replied on behalf of the Lord Chamberlain; the admirers of that same distinguished gentleman may appear in force at the theatre and resent in a most practical manner any gentle satire of their favourite. I confess that I do not see

much real reason in this reply. Authors and managers may be safely trusted not to produce anything which is really likely to originate a riot; and the same arguments which suppressed the lively representation of the Three Right Honourables at the Court Theatre, would have justified the putting of an extinguisher upon Mr. Belmore's 'Cromwell' at the Lyceum. The existing censorship of the drama is an abiding proof of the strong conservatism existing in the British people; the Press has been properly emancipated from all state supervision in obedience to an imperative demand for freedom in the honest expression of opinion; but we are all content to maintain the Lord Chamberlain's jurisdiction over theatrical productions for much the same reason that we preserve instruments of torture and ancient weapons in our museums. The members of certain religious bodies, I am told, sleep every night in their coffins in order to remind them of what they must one day come to, and so the necessary licensing of a play brings forcibly to our recollection what we were. Both practices are, no doubt, extremely salutary, both are disciplinary, and both are equally uncomfortable. Still we may all admit with a certain degree of cheerfulness that it is as well not to be entirely emancipated from the traditions of the past, and Mr. W. B. Donne's duties link us in no very harsh manner to the darker times it would not be wholesome for us entirely to forget.

The thorough liberty of the Press that now exists is unquestionably justified by the proper feelings which restrain in an admirable degree anything approaching to the personalities which prevail in the journals on

the other side of the Atlantic; but I have noticed with regret that one or two of the 'comic' papers are inclined to stretch the limits which public opinion ungrudgingly accords, and to worry individuals in a manner which may in time become intolerable. One penny 'comic,' I observe with pain, is perpetually harassing the editor of another 'comic,' in a manner which is of no possible interest to the public, and is, indeed, to the outside world wholly unintelligible. Surely this is not the business of a paper which is intended to contribute to the general amusement by dealing with subjects that all readers have a certain amount of interest in. Another pre-eminently 'comic' journal—the 'leading comic' it may be termed—is not above holding up certain prominent persons in the religious world to scorn and ridicule. Surely this is a great mistake. Satirise cant and humbug as much as you please; but if a man differs from you in his religious opinions, you have no right to brand him as a knave or a fool. In such speculative matters he is perhaps quite as likely to be right as anybody else; indeed, the religious convictions that can only support themselves by abuse and contempt of their opponents are most likely to be in the wrong. I do not hesitate to commend this remark to some of the conductors of our religious journals; and, without taking too much upon myself, I might venture to add that it is not unworthy of the consideration of more than one member of the episcopal bench. Literary critics there are, too, to whom such advice is not altogether needless. There is a great temptation in anonymous writing to pillory one's adversaries with hidden hands, and to throw stones at

them from behind safe shelter. Actions for libel are expensive and unsatisfactory, and the victim of journalistic denunciation can, in most cases, only writhe in silence. We all of us have our individual trials to bear, and the race we run in the pursuit of competence is hard to most of us. If we did a little more towards others as we would be done by we should possibly find our tasks the easier and our sleep the sweeter.

I have recently received the following letter, and as I am sure that the writer desires that his sentiments should be widely known, I feel certain that I am violating no confidence in giving it to the public.

SIR,—I have read with a certain amount of interest the remarks that you have from time to time thought fit to make on the subjects of the Drama and Dramatic Criticism. May I ask you, sir, at what theatre I may find the one, and in what journal I am to search for the other? At the time that I write I am able to admit that Shakespeare's plays are certainly being performed at the Princess's Theatre, but it is not Shakespeare's genius that I am invited to go and see, but only Herr Bandmann. Of that gentleman's proficiency in the histrionic art I entertain a very high opinion; but, having said that, I have said all that is expected of me. 'Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Richard III.,' are all absorbed in the German actor; it is to see Bandmann in a different dress, and under different conditions, that I pay for admission to the stalls. Shakespeare's play, in fact, is nothing but a setting for the jewel, Bandmann. Will it be considered very bad taste on my part if I venture to observe that the works of the

foremost dramatist in all the world deserve a somewhat higher consideration, and ought not to be merely turned into a vehicle for the illustration of a single individual's powers? There was once a lessee of this same theatre that took a wider view, and Mr. Charles Kean's revivals were based upon a totally different principle from that which now, apparently, obtains. I go to the Lyceum Theatre for the purpose of witnessing an historical drama, and here I find four pictures, all excellent in their way, but here, again, I see one solitary figure, Mr. Irving; the painter appears to me to have been solicitous about that alone, and the manager has supplied what may be termed a most elegant frame. It is not the drama that excites my interest, but the 'make up' and elocution of the principal performer. I turn my steps to the Haymarket, but in witnessing 'The Wicked World' I do not find that which I might reasonably have expected to find, viz., a keen satire upon modern society, but only what is termed a fairy comedy; and here I become acquainted with a quaint poetic production, possessing a certain fascinating shape, but wholly lacking strong dramatic backbone, if I may use the term. At two other theatres I find a dramatised version of one of Charles Dickens's novels, 'David Copperfield,' as interesting a story, perhaps, as any that great modern master of fiction ever produced, but one wholly incapable of adequate stage-rendering. I go to the Globe, the Vaudeville, the Charing Cross, and I find resuscitations of well-worn comedies that cannot indeed wholly lose their charm, but which strike the spectator as being something stale, and as being successful mainly from the complete way in which

they are reproduced, and from the ability of one or two of the performers. I go to the St. James's, and I sit out an English version of a Parisian satire, which appears to me to sound a faint echo, and is by no means soul-inspiring, though I am far from denying that 'Robert Rabagas' has not a few special merits of its own. I go to the Court Theatre, and there I find the principal attraction to be a parody upon 'The Wicked World'; and some folks consider the parody to be more amusing than the original. I am solicited to go to the Adelphi and witness for the hundredth time the 'Beggar's Opera' and 'The Green Bushes'; this is an invitation which I decline with thanks. The question which I have now to ask, sir, is, how is it that at no theatre can I find that which I desire to see, viz., a well-written, interesting, substantial modern drama? Must I really believe that the race of serious dramatists is becoming extinct? Mr. Tom Taylor and Dr. Westland Marston may think it time to seek a well-earned repose, but is there no one upon whom their mantles may descend? Mr. Watts Phillips has done many highly creditable things, but surely his genius has not culminated in 'Amos Clark.' Cannot Mr. Wills be persuaded to try his hand at a modern play? His reputation will, at least, bear the test, and his energies must be sufficient for the trial. We, the play-goers, have suffered long enough from the burden of watching translations of, and adaptations from, the French; we want to see a genuine article of home production. Let our writers by all means go to school at Paris, but they need not content themselves with servile imitations of their masters, or plagiarism, more or less acknowledged, of their refined conceptions.

We hear a great deal about the 'decline of the drama,' and certain persons profess to lament that our old dramatists have no representatives nowadays, and that the modern dramatic author is merely a purveyor of certain commodities which are in demand at certain theatres. I am compelled to confess, at the risk of having the quality of my taste impugned, that I cannot altogether sympathise with this complaint. I am sorry to say that my experience of the old comedies is that they are simply a mass of indecency, by the side of which the modern French melo-drama is absolutely chaste. It need scarcely be said that an old comedy cannot be safely represented on the stage nowadays without the most ruthless excision of what, perhaps, our excellent, but slightly coarse, ancestors possibly considered the wittiest parts. Now our modern authors, if they do not soar into the sublime, never descend into what is even remotely abhorrent to the taste; they have shown that they can be amusing without being disgusting; and therefore I contend that they ought not to be depreciated in the manner which seems a second nature to some of our critics. My chief objection to them is that they are content with merely affording an hour's thoughtless amusement; they seldom, if ever, attempt anything beyond; and the inevitable consequence is that the actor's art becomes proportionably lowered, because it is always easier to stir the sense of the ridiculous than the sense of the sublime; and so it comes to pass that we have hardly a tragedian upon the stage; certainly, I fear, we have nobody who can fill a house as Mr. J. L. Toole can do. Irresistibly funny as this gentleman always is, he frequently makes us regret Rob-

son; and those who have watched his career cannot but feel, knowing how great his talents are, that on certain occasions, when he has had a proper opportunity, he has betrayed signs of higher capabilities, which we are sorry he has not cultivated, and made us think he might have achieved a more worthy reputation than that of being the lowest comedian and the best burlesque actor we possess.

The French drama is at the present day unquestionably the best. In a literary point of view no English productions can rival it, and for true stage effect it is beyond all chance of competition, as far as we can see. Substantial reasons for this superiority are not difficult to find. The French are eminently a dramatic nation, and with them the theatre is an institution such as, from our national habits and conventionalities, it probably never will be amongst us. The highly cultivated and intellectual Frenchman turns naturally to the stage for the expression of his sympathies and ideas. With him, to write a drama is not a mere professional pursuit; it is to him as worthy and as desirable an occupation as an historical study or a philosophical review is to our literary chiefs. An Edinburgh Reviewer or a leading-article writer in the 'Times' would probably never even dream of devoting his time and energies to writing for the stage; and yet, if such men would think it worth their while to make the attempt, we might not impossibly hope to see upon the London boards a play which would go far to redeem the character of our playwrights. I am quite aware that the notion seems ridiculous in the highest degree, but it does not therefore follow that it is of necessity intrinsically absurd. We ought to

use more freely the principle of *collaboration*; for it is very evident that a good sterling writer may produce an admirable drama which is wholly unfitted for stage representation; but if he admits into his confidence some other mind that possesses the qualities of dramatic construction and the necessary instincts and practical experience, the result is certain to be successful in a high degree.

But, unfortunately, there does not appear to be any very great temptation to the higher class of writers to try their fortune upon the stage. We hear such unpleasant remarks about 'amateurish' productions and such disparagement of 'unacted authors,' that we are driven to believe that dramatic writing is nothing but a defined professional career and a commercial pursuit. We are told pretty plainly by the critics of the daily press that it is thus to be regarded, and therefore we cannot be surprised that matured minds hesitate to try for a prize in a curriculum in which they have not been accustomed to run. Hence it is that we find the drama entirely in the hands of a few stock authors, and to them alone managers are disposed to trust the fortunes of their theatres.

Now, whilst I sincerely congratulate these gentlemen upon their monopoly, and am ready to admit that they have duly earned their reward by their unceasing labour and assiduous efforts to please, I am not sure that I can as sincerely congratulate the public. The power of governing the British empire is, as recent experience has only too plainly shown us, in the hands of a remarkably small circle. We are compelled to choose between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli, and there appears to be no alternative whatever. Gratifying as this state

of things may be to the individuals concerned, it is certainly a fair question to ask how far imperial policy is benefited by this narrow choice. To this it may be at once replied that the public appears to be contented, and from that general satisfaction there is no appeal. But I think I may reasonably rejoin that the public is compelled to be contented, because no other choice is offered to it; nobody seems to be prepared to come to the front and take responsibility. This, undoubtedly, is very much to be deplored, and we may go on to argue that if new hands are not encouraged they will remain passive, and the public has only itself to blame if things are not found to be altogether what they ought to be. And so we may equally infer, that if the paying playgoers still continue to pay and go, they are satisfied with the theatrical pabulum administered to them, and it is Quixotic to attempt to change their tastes.

Sir, I do not believe that either the political or dramatic public are sincerely contented. We are a long-suffering people; and it is my lot to hear grumblers 'not loud, but deep,' on both these points. With the former I am not concerned, except by way of illustration; but with regard to the latter, I can only echo what I have frequently heard in the stalls and in outer social conversation. People *do* ask how it is they never have a chance of seeing a thoroughly good, sound, substantial play—something that really awakens the interest, stirs the emotions, and rivets the attention. We have been so long without anything of the kind, it is urged, that really we are beginning to take the coldest interest in the theatre, where we might fairly expect to find our highest

amusement and most intellectual recreation. We are ready to admit that countless opportunities are afforded to us for tickling our sense of the ludicrous, but immoderate fits of laughter are invariably followed by depression of spirits; and when we leave the auditorium, the only sensation we experience is, that we have been relieved of the money we paid for an unremunerative entertainment. Give us something that makes a worthy impression upon our minds; let us hear one line that will dwell in our memories and that we can quote with admiration. Show us an actor with the opportunity of holding up the glass to nature. Represent before us a play which truly touches the springs of human thought and action; lash as you will the vices and follies of society, but at the same time let us see something

of the nobler side of man, some reflection of his loftier aspirations, some more faithful picture of his energy, his ambition, and his love.

I had intended to venture a few remarks upon our professional dramatic censors; but, conscious of the delicacy of the ground upon which I should have to tread, I will, with your permission, defer my observations for another occasion.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
P. Q.'

I had thought of appending a few comments to various portions of my correspondent's communication, but I think, on reflection, that it would be unnecessary, and therefore I shall, at all events, defer my remarks until I am favoured with further views.

FREE LANCE.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

'Oakshott Castle.' By Henry Kingsley. *Macmillan & Co.*

'Chesterleigh.' By Ansley Conyers. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'German National Cookery for English Kitchens.' *Chapman & Hall.*

'Manners of Modern Society.' *Cassell, Petter & Galpin.*

'Facts and Hints for Every-day Life.' *Cassell, Petter, & Galpin.*

'Plucky Fellows.' By S. J. McKenna. *Henry S. King & Co.*

'The Bridal Bouquet,' and 'Gone Before.' By Henry Southgate. *Lockwood & Co.*

'The Atlantic Monthly.' *Frederick Warne & Co.*

THERE are some novels that, without laying claim to any great excellence in composition or writing, contrive, by means of an interesting plot, to chain our attention to the last page, when we start to find ourselves no better or wiser for the perusal ; others, again, without any pretensions to dramatic construction or effect, are so smartly written as to make us almost forget they are wanting in the first requisite of the modern romance. To this class belongs Mr. H. Kingsley's new work. The plot of 'Oakshott Castle' is unworthy of the name. It is feeble, unnatural, and carelessly developed, and the incidents are hackneyed and over-drawn ; yet the conversations that link the scanty incidents together are transcribed in so fluent, bright, and natural a manner that they force interest for themselves alone. The story of 'Oakshott Castle' vanishes from the memory as soon as read, but the brightness of the book remains to freshen up one's conversation at the dinner-table and make one think what a

pity it is that so able a writer should have considered it beneath his talent to elaborate his scenario. 'Oakshott Castle' is in no way worthy to be placed on the bookshelf beside 'Ravenshoe.' And what can Mr. H. Kingsley be about to imagine there can be any wit in making dashes stand for coarseness he is afraid to write down in black and white ?

* * * * *

Not having met with the name of Ansley Conyers before, we presume he is an unpractised writer, and, therefore, feel disposed to deal more leniently with 'Chesterleigh' than we should otherwise do. The story has evidently been written and developed with considerable pains. Indeed, herein lies one of its chief faults, for the various events are detailed with such minuteness as seriously to bore the reader and lay the author open to the charge of 'padding.' The principal incident of the plot, too, that of the illegitimate son of a nobleman defacing the parish register of marriages, in order to maintain the title he fraudulently holds, has been done to death already. It is possible that the author of 'Chesterleigh' has it in him to do something better than the novel before us, but if he desires to attain any position in literature, he must strike out a more original path for himself in future. There is nothing new in 'Chesterleigh : ' incidents, characters, and surroundings have all been met before ; and there is not a strongly-marked feature in the whole story. When we have said this, however, we have said the worst. It is a novel strictly moral, from the first line to the last, and one

which may be placed with safety in the hands of any young person.

* * * * *

'German National Cookery for English Kitchens' is another and most valuable addition to our already well-filled shelf of cookery books. But this one supplies a want which has been long felt, and enables us to reproduce at a trifling cost the dishes which may have taken our fancy most when on our travels. Scarcely any Britishers like foreign cookery as a whole, but we all know how they excel us on the Continent (and especially in Germany) in fancy dishes. Well! here are to be found receipts for making klosse and nudeln and strudeln and plinsen; pasteten, torten, and compôtes, enough to make one's mouth water, besides various economical methods of cooking meat and vegetables, which might be introduced with much benefit to our more expensive cuisines. We heartily recommend this cookery book to all true housekeepers.

* * * * *

'Facts and Hints for Every-day Life,' and 'Manners of Modern Society,' are two of those useful manuals which should be found everywhere. We especially like the 'Manners of Modern Society,' which is very superior to any book of etiquette it has been our lot to read before; and bears impress on every page of having been written (or revised) by some one who really knows what good society in the nineteenth century is.

* * * * *

'Plucky Fellows' is a thorough book for boys. It has no picked phrases nor fine writing in it, but is written throughout in a manly, straightforward, not too particular, manner, that is sure to win the hearts of the children for whom

it is intended. It is generally rather a task for elders to wade through a volume intended exclusively for the rising generation, but no one who takes an interest in the development of the two great British virtues, pluck and perseverance, will feel bored by the perusal of Mr. McKenna's book.

* * * * *

'The Bridal Bouquet,' [and 'Gone Before' are two volumes of extracts, collected by the same author on very different subjects; both collections being equally appropriate to the topics of which they treat. The binding of the 'Bridal Bouquet,' with its white ground, embellished by orange blossoms and leaves, is most elegant and effective, and the volume is in every way fitted for the purpose for which it has been compiled.

* * * * *

We have received the January, February, and March numbers of the 'Atlantic Monthly,' a first-class American periodical, the publishing of the London edition of which has been entrusted to Mr. Frederick Warne. This magazine contains 128 pages of closely-printed matter, most of which may compare favourably with the contents of our best serials. As a young author will occasionally display a crude vigour in his first writings, which he attempts, ineffectually, to recall and mingle with his more polished and later style, so do we sometimes find in the literature of this rising nation a freshness and muscle which we may look for in vain amongst our own jaded, though more elegant writers. The intellects and ideas of America are unpractised and young; but, at the same time, they are original and strong, and

only too little diffused and appreciated in this country. America has few great writers, but she has many good ones. There is a song in the January number of the 'Atlantic Monthly,' by Celia Thaxter, that we cannot resist quoting in proof of our assertion:

' We sail toward evening's lonely star,
That trembles in the tender blue;
One single cloud, a dusky bar,
Burnt with dull carmine through
and through,
Slow shouldering in the summer sky,
Lies low along the fading west;
How sweet to watch its splendors die,
Wave-cradled thus, and wind-ca-
ressed !'

' The soft breeze freshens; leaps the spray

To kiss our cheeks with sudden cheer.

Upon the dark edge of the bay

Lighthouses kindle far and near,
And through the warm deeps of the sky

Steal faint star-clusters, while we rest

In deep refreshment, thou and I,

Wave-cradled thus, and wind-ca-
ressed.

' How like a dream are earth and heaven,
Star-beam and darkness, sky and sea;

Thy face, pale in the shadowy even,

Thy quiet eyes that gaze on me!

O! realise the moment's charm,

Thou dearest! We are at life's best,

Folded in God's encircling Arm,

Wave-cradled thus, and wind ca-
ressed !'





Drawn by Harrison Weir)

"THE FUTURE COVEY."

LONDON SOCIETY.

JUNE, 1873.

A SIMPLETON.

A Story of the Bay.

By CHARLES READE.

[At the Author's particular request this story is not illustrated.]

CHAPTER XIX.

THE electrified man rushed out into the storm, but he scarcely felt it in his body; the effect on his mind overpowered hailstones. The lightning seemed to light up the Past; the mighty explosions of thunder seemed cannon strokes knocking down a wall, and letting in his whole life.

Six hours the storm raged, and, before it ended, he had recovered nearly his whole Past, except his voyage with Captain Dodd—that, indeed, he never recovered—and the things that happened to him in the hospital before he met Phœbe Falcon and her brother: and, as soon as he had recovered his lost memory, his body began to shiver at the hail and rain. He tried to find his way home, but missed it; not so much, however, but that he recovered it as soon as it began to clear, and, just as they were coming out to look for him, he appeared before them, dripping, shivering, very pale and worn, with the handkerchief still about his head.

At sight of him, Dick slipped back to his sister, and said, rather roughly, ‘There now, you may leave off crying: he is come home; and to-morrow I take him to Cape Town.’

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Christopher crept in, a dismal, sinister figure.

‘Oh, sir,’ said Phœbe, ‘was this a day for a Christian to be out in? How could you go and frighten us so?’

‘Forgive me, madam,’ said Christopher, humbly; ‘I was not myself.’

‘The best thing you can do now is to go to bed, and let us send you up something warm.’

‘You are very good,’ said Christopher, and retired with the air of one too full of great amazing thoughts to gossip.

He slept thirty hours at a stretch, and then, awaking in the dead of night, he saw the past even more clear and vivid; he lighted his candle and began to grope in the ‘Cape Gazette.’ As to dates, he now remembered when he had sailed from England, and also from Madeira. Following up this clue, he found in the ‘Gazette’ a notice that H. M. ship ‘Amphitrite’ had been spoken off the Cape, and had reported the melancholy loss of a promising physician and man of science, Dr. Staines.

The account said every exertion had been made to save him, but in vain.

Staines ground his teeth with rage at this. ‘Every exertion! the false-hearted curs. They left me to drown, without one manly effort to save me. Curse them, and curse all the world.’

Pursuing his researches rapidly he found a much longer account of a raft picked up by Captain Dodd, with a white man on it and a dead body, the white man having on him a considerable sum in money and jewels.

Then a new anxiety chilled him. There was not a word to identify him with Dr. Staines. The idea had never occurred to the editor of the ‘Cape Gazette.’ Still less would it occur to any one in England. At this moment his wife must be mourning for him. ‘Poor—poor Rosa!’

But perhaps the fatal news might not have reached her.

That hope was dashed away as soon as found. Why these were all *old newspapers*. That gentlemanly man who had lent them to him had said so.

Old! yet they completed the year 1867.

He now tore through them for the dates alone, and soon found they went to 1868. Yet they were old papers. He had sailed in May, 1867.

‘My God!’ he cried, in agony, ‘I HAVE LOST A YEAR.’

This thought crushed him. By-and-by he began to carry this awful thought into details. My Rosa has worn mourning for me, and put it off again. I am dead to her, and to all the world.’

He wept long and bitterly.

Those tears cleared his brain still more. For all that, he was not yet himself; at least, I doubt it; his insanity, driven from the intellect, fastened one lingering claw into his moral nature, and hung on by it. His soul filled with bitterness and a desire to be

revenged on mankind for their injustice, and this thought possessed him more than reason.

He joined the family at breakfast; and never a word all the time. But, when he got up to go, he said, in a strange, dogged way, as if it went against the grain, ‘God bless the house that succours the afflicted.’ Then he went out to brood alone.

‘Dick,’ said Phœbe, ‘there’s a change. I’ll never part with him: and look, there’s Colly following him, that never could abide him.’

‘Part with him?’ said Reginald. ‘Of course not. He is a gentleman, and they are not so common in Africa.’

Dick, who hated Falcon, ignored this speech entirely, and said, ‘Well, Pheeb, you and Colly are wiser than I am. Take your own way, and don’t blame me if anything happens.’

And soon Christopher paid the penalty of returning reason. He suffered all the poignant agony a great heart can endure.

So this was his reward for his great act of self-denial in leaving his beloved wife. He had lost his patient; he had lost the income from that patient; his wife was worse off than before, and had doubtless suffered the anguish of a loving heart bereaved. His mind, which now seemed more vigorous than ever, after its long rest, placed her before his very eyes, pale, and worn with grief, in her widow’s cap.

At the picture, he cried like the rain. He could give her joy, by writing; but he could not prevent her from suffering a whole year of misery.

Turning this over in connection with their poverty, his evil genius whispered, ‘By this time she has received the six thousand pounds for your death. She would never

think of that; but her father has: and there is her comfort assured, in spite of the caitiffs who left her husband to drown like a dog.'

'I know my Rosa,' he thought. She has swooned—ah, my poor darling—she has raved—she has wept—' he wept himself at the thought—' she has mourned every indiscreet act, as if it was a crime. But she has done all this. Her good and loving, but shallow nature, is now at rest from the agonies of bereavement, and nought remains but sad and tender regrets. She can better endure that than poverty: cursed poverty, which has brought her and me to this, and is the only real evil in the world, but bodily pain.'

Then came a struggle, that lasted a whole week, and knitted his brows, and took the colour from his cheek; but it ended in the triumph of love and hate, over conscience and common sense. His Rosa should not be poor; and he would cheat some of those contemptible creatures called men, who had done him nothing but injustice, and at last had sacrificed his life like a rat's.

When the struggle was over, and the fatal resolution taken, then he became calmer, less solitary, and more sociable.

Phœbe, who was secretly watching him with a woman's eye, observed this change in him, and with benevolent intentions, invited him one day to ride round the farm with her. He consented readily. She showed him the fields devoted to maize and wheat, and then the sheep-folds. Tim's sheep were apparently deserted; but he was discovered swinging head downwards from the branch of a camelthorn, and seeing him, it did strike one that if he had had a tail he would have been swinging by that. Phœbe called to him: he never answered, but

set off running to her, and landed himself under her nose in a wheel somersault.

'I hope you are watching them, Tim,' said his mistress.

'Iss, missy, always washing 'em.'

'Why there's one straying towards the wood now.'

'He not go far,' said Tim, coolly. The young monkey stole off a little way, then fell flat, and uttered the cry of a jackal, with startling precision. Back went the sheep to his comrades post haste, and Tim effected a somersault and a chuckle.

'You are a clever boy,' said Phœbe. 'So that is how you manage them.'

'Dat one way, missy,' said Tim, not caring to reveal all his resources at once.

Then Phœbe rode on, and showed Christopher the ostrich pan. It was a large basin, a form the soil often takes in these parts; and in it strutted several full-grown ostriches and their young, bred on the premises. There was a little dam of water, and plenty of food about. They were herded by a Cafir infant of about six, black, glossy, fat, and clean, being in the water six times a day.

Sometimes one of the older birds would show an inclination to stray out of the pan. Then the infant rolled after her, and tapped her ankles with a wand. She instantly came back, but without any loss of dignity, for she strutted with her nose in the air, affecting completely to ignore the inferior little animal, that was nevertheless controlling her movements. 'There's a farce,' said Phœbe. 'But you would not believe the money they cost me, nor the money they bring me in. Grain will not sell here for a quarter its value: and we can't afford to send it to Cape Town,

twenty days and back; but finery, that sells everywhere. I gather sixty pounds the year off those poor fowls' backs—clear profit.'

She showed him the granary, and told him there wasn't such another in Africa. This farm had belonged to one of the old Dutch settlers, and that breed had been going down this many a year. ' You see, sir, Dick and I being English, and not downright in want of money, we can't bring ourselves to sell grain to the middlemen for nothing, so we store it, hoping for better times, that maybe will never come. Now I'll show you how the dam is made.'

They inspected the dam all round. ' This is our best friend of all,' said she. ' Without this the sun would turn us all to tinder, crops, flowers, beasts, and folk.'

' Oh indeed,' said Staines. ' Then it is a pity you have not built it more scientifically. I must have a look at this.'

' Ay do, sir, and advise us if you see anything wrong. But hark! it is milking time. Come and see that.' So she led the way to some sheds, and there they found several cows being milked, each by a little calf and a little Hottentot at the same time, and both fighting and jostling each other for the udder. Now and then a young cow unused to incongruous twins, would kick impatiently at both animals and scatter them.

' That is their way,' said Phœbe: ' they have got it into their silly Hottentot heads as kye won't yield their milk if the calf is taken away; and it is no use arguing with 'em; they will have their own way; but they are very trusty and honest, poor things. We soon found that out. When we came here first it was in a hired waggon, and Hottentot drivers: so when we came

to settle I made ready for a bit of a wrangle. But my maid Sophy, that is nurse now, and a great despiser of heathens, she says, " Don't you trouble; them nasty ignorant blacks never charges more than their due." " I forgive 'em," says I; " I wish all white folk was as nice." However, I did give them a trifle over, for luck: and then they got together and chattered something near the door, hand in hand. " La, Sophy," says I, " what is up now?" Says she, " They are blessing of us. Things is come to a pretty pass, for ignorant Muslinmen heathen to be blessing Christian folk." " Well," says I, " it won't hurt us any." " I don't know," says she. " I don't want the devil prayed over me." So she cocked that long nose of hers and followed it in a doors.'

By this time they were near the house, and Phœbe was obliged to come to her postscript, for the sake of which, believe me, she had uttered every syllable of this varied chat. ' Well, sir,' said she, affecting to proceed without any considerable change of topic, ' and how do you find yourself? Have you discovered the Past?'

' I have, madam. I remember every leading incident of my life.'

' And has it made you happier?' said Phœbe, softly.

' No,' said Christopher, gravely. ' Memory has brought me misery.'

' I feared as much; for you have lost your fine colour, and your eyes are hollow, and lines on your poor brow that were not there before. Are you not sorry you have discovered the past?'

' No, Mrs. Falcon. Give me the sovereign gift of reason, with all the torture it can inflict. I thank God for returning memory, even with the misery it brings.'

Phœbe was silent a long time: then she said, in a low, gentle

voice, and with the indirectness of a truly feminine nature, 'I have plenty of writing-paper in the house; and the post goes south to-morrow, such as 'tis.'

Christopher struggled with his misery, and trembled.

He was silent a long time. Then he said, 'No. It is her interest that I should be dead.'

'Well, but, sir—take a thought.'

'Not a word more, I implore you. I am the most miserable man that ever breathed.' As he spoke, two bitter tears forced their way.

Phoebe cast a look of pity on him, and said no more; but she shook her head. Her plain common sense revolted.

However, it did not follow he would be in the same mind next week: so she was in excellent spirits at her protégé's recovery, and very proud of her cure, and celebrated the event with a roaring supper, including an English ham, and a bottle of port wine; and, ten to one, that was English too.

Dick Dale looked a little incredulous, but he did not spare the ham any the more for that.

After supper, in a pause of the conversation, Staines turned to Dick, and said, rather abruptly, 'Suppose that dam of yours were to burst and empty its contents, would it not be a great misfortune to you?'

'Misfortune, sir! Don't talk of it. Why, it would ruin us, beast and body.'

'Well, it will burst, if it is not looked to.'

'Dale's Kloof dam burst! the biggest and strongest for a hundred miles round.'

'You deceive yourself. It is not scientifically built, to begin, and there is a cause at work that will infallibly burst it, if not looked to in time.'

'And what is that, sir?'

'The dam is full of crabs.'

'So 'tis; but what of them?'

'I detected two of them that had perforated the dyke from the wet side to the dry, and water was trickling through the channel they had made. Now, for me to catch two that had come right through, there must be a great many at work honey-combing your dyke; those channels, once made, will be enlarged by the permeating water, and a mere cupful of water forced into a dyke by the great pressure of a heavy column has an expansive power quite out of proportion to the quantity forced in. Colossal dykes have been burst in this way with disastrous effects. Indeed it is only a question of time, and I would not guarantee your dyke twelve hours. It is full, too, with the heavy rains.'

'Here's a go!' said Dick, turning pale. 'Well, if it is to burst, it must.'

'Why so? You can make it safe in a few hours. You have got a clumsy contrivance for letting off the excess of water: let us go and relieve the dam at once of two feet of water. That will make it safe for a day or two, and to-morrow we will puddle it afresh, and demolish those busy excavators.'

He spoke with such authority and earnestness, that they all got up from table: a horn was blown that soon brought the Hottentots, and they all proceeded to the dam. With infinite difficulty they opened the waste sluice, lowered the water two feet, and so drenched the arid soil that in forty-eight hours flowers unknown sprang up.

Next morning, under the doctor's orders, all the black men and boys were diving with lumps of stiff clay and puddling the endangered wall with a thick wall of it. This

took all the people the whole day.

Next day the clay wall was carried two feet higher, and then the doctor made them work on the other side and buttress the dyke with supports so enormous as seemed extravagant to Dick and Phosbe; but, after all, it was as well to be on the safe side, they thought: and soon they were sure of it, for the whole work was hardly finished when news came in that the dyke of a neighbouring Boer, ten miles off, had exploded like a cannon, and emptied itself in five minutes, drowning the farmyard and floating the furniture, but leaving them all to perish of drought; and indeed the Boer's cart came every day, with empty barrels, for some time, to beg water of the Dales. Ucatella pondered all this, and said her doctor child was wise.

This brief excitement over, Staines went back to his own gloomy thoughts, and they scarcely saw him, except at supper-time.

One evening he surprised them all by asking if they would add to all their kindness by lending him a horse, and a spade, and a few pounds, to go to the diamond fields.

Dick Dale looked at his sister. She said, 'We had rather lend them you to go home with, sir, if you must leave us; but, dear heart, I was half in hopes—Dick and I were talking it over only yesterday—that you would go partners like with us; ever since you saved the dam.'

'I have too little to offer for that, Mrs. Falcon; and, besides, I am driven into a corner. I must make money quickly, or not at all: the diamonds are only three hundred miles off: for heaven's sake, let me try my luck.'

They tried to dissuade him, and

told him not one in fifty did any good at it.

'Ay, but *I* shall,' said he. 'Great bad luck is followed by great good luck, and I feel my turn is come. Not that I rely on luck. An accident directed my attention to the diamond a few years ago, and I read a number of prime works upon the subject that told me things not known to the miners. It is clear, from the Cape journals, that they are looking for diamonds in the river only. Now, I am sure that is a mistake. Diamonds, like gold, have their matrix, and it is comparatively few gems that get washed into the river. I am confident that I shall find the volcanic matrix, and perhaps make my fortune in a week or two.'

When the dialogue took this turn, Reginald Falcon's cheek began to flush, and his eyes to glitter.

Christopher continued. 'You, who have befriended me so, will not turn back, I am sure, when I have such a chance before me; and, as for the small sum of money I shall require, I will repay you some day, even if —'

'La, sir, don't talk so. If you put it that way, why the best horse we have, and fifty pounds in good English gold, they are at your service to-morrow.'

'And pick and spade to boot,' said Dick, 'and a double rifle, for there are lions, and Lord knows what, between this and the Vaal river.'

'God bless you both!' said Christopher. 'I will start to-morrow.'

'And I'll go with you,' said Reginald Falcon.

CHAPTER XX.

'Heaven forbid!' said Phœbe. 'No, my dear, no more diamonds for us. We never had but one, and it brought us trouble.'

'Nonsense, Phœbe,' replied Falcon; 'it was not the diamond's fault. You know I have often wanted to go there; but you objected. You said you were afraid some evil would befall me. But now Solomon himself is going to the mines, let us have no more of that nonsense. We will take our rifles and our pistols.'

'There — there — rifles and pistols,' cried Phœbe; 'that shows.'

'And we will be there in a week; stay a month, and home with our pockets full of diamonds.'

'And find me dead of a broken heart.'

'Broken fiddlestick! We have been parted longer than that, and yet here we are all right.'

'Ay, but the pitcher that goes too often to the well gets broke at last. No, Reginald, now I have tasted three years' happiness and peace of mind, I cannot go through what I used in England. Oh, doctor! have you the heart to part man and wife, that have never been a day from each other all these years?'

'Mrs. Falcon, I would not do it for all the diamonds in Brazil. No, Mr. Falcon, I need hardly say how charmed I should be to have your company: but that is a pleasure I shall certainly deny myself, after what your good wife has said. I owe her too much, to cause her a single pang.'

'Doctor,' said the charming Reginald, 'you are a gentleman, and side with the lady. Quite right. It adds to my esteem, if possible. Make your mind easy; I will go alone. I am not a farmer. I am dead sick of this monotonous

life; and, since I am compelled to speak my mind, a little ashamed, as a gentleman, of living on my wife and her brother, and doing nothing for myself. So I shall go to the Vaal river, and see a little life; here there's nothing but vegetation—and not much of that. Not a word more, Phœbe, if you please. I am a good, easy, affectionate husband, but I am a man, and not a child to be tied to a woman's apron-strings, however much I may love and respect her.'

Dick put in his word. 'Since you are so independent, you can walk to the Vaal river. I can't spare a couple of horses.'

This hit the Sybarite hard, and he cast a bitter glance of hatred at his brother-in-law; and fell into a moody silence.

But, when he got Phœbe to himself, he descanted on her selfishness, Dick's rudeness, and his own wounded dignity, till he made her quite anxious he should have his own way. She came to Staines, with red eyes, and said, 'Tell me, doctor, will there be any women up there—to take care of you?'

'Not a petticoat in the place, I believe. It is a very rough life: and how Falcon could think of leaving you and sweet little Tommy, and this life of health, and peace, and comfort —'

'Yet you do leave us, sir.'

'I am the most unfortunate man upon the earth; Falcon is one of the happiest. Would I leave wife and child to go there? Ah me! I am dead to those I love. This is my one chance of seeing my darling again for many a long year perhaps. Oh, I must not speak of her—it unmans me. My good, kind friend, I'll tell you what to do. When we are all at supper, let a horse be saddled and left in the yard for me. I'll bid you all good night, and I'll put fifty miles between us before morn-

ing. Even then he need not be told I am gone; he will not follow me.'

' You are very good, sir,' said Phœbe; ' but no. Too much has been said. I can't have him humbled by my brother, nor any one. He says I am selfish. Perhaps I am; though I never was called so. I can't bear he should think me selfish. He will go: and so let us have no ill blood about it. Since he is to go, of course I'd much liever he should go with you, than by himself. You are sure there are no women up there—to take care of—you—both? You must be purse-bearer, sir, and look to every penny. He is too generous when he has got money to spend.'

In short, Reginald had played so upon her heart, that she now urged the joint expedition, only she asked a delay of a day or two to equip them, and steel herself to the separation.

Staines did not share those vague fears that overpowered the wife, whose bitter experiences were unknown to him; but he felt uncomfortable at her condition—for now she was often in tears—and he said all he could to comfort her; and he also advised her how to profit by these terrible diamonds, in her way. He pointed out to her that her farm lay right in the road to the diamonds, yet the traffic all shunned her, passing twenty miles to the westward. Said he, ' You should profit by all your resources. You have wood, a great rarity in Africa; order a portable forge; run up a building where miners can sleep, another where they can feed; the grain you have so wisely refused to sell, grind it into flour.'

' Dear heart! why there's neither wind nor water to turn a mill.'

' But there are oxen. I'll show you how to make an ox-mill. Send your Cape cart into Cape Town for

iron lathes, for coffee, and tea, and groceries by the hundredweight. The moment you are ready—for success depends on the order in which we act—then prepare great boards, and plant them twenty miles south. Write, or paint, on them, very large, "The nearest way to the Diamond Mines, through Dale's Kloof, where is excellent accommodation for man and beast. Tea, coffee, home-made bread, fresh butter, etc., etc." Do this and you will soon leave off decrying diamonds. This is the sure way to coin them. I myself take the doubtful way; but I can't help it. I am a dead man, and swift good fortune will give me life. You can afford to go the slower road and the surer.'

Then he drew her the model of an ox-mill, and of a miner's dormitory, the partitions six feet six apart, so that these very partitions formed the bedstead, the bed-sacking being hooked to the uprights. He drew his model for twenty bedrooms.

The portable forge and the ox-mill pleased Dick Dale most, but the partitioned bedsteads charmed Phœbe. She said, ' Oh, doctor, how can one man's head hold so many things? If there's a man on earth I can trust my husband with, 'tis you. But, if things go cross up there, promise me you will come back at once and cast in your lot with us. We have got money and stock, and you have got head-piece: we might do very well together. Indeed, indeed we might. Promise me. Oh do, please, promise me!'

' I promise you.'

And, on this understanding, Staines and Falcon were equipped with rifles, pickaxe, shovels, waterproofs, and full saddle-bags, and started, with many shakings of the hand, and many tears from Phœbe, for the diamond washings.

CHAPTER XXI.

Phoebe's tears at parting made Staines feel uncomfortable, and he said so.

'Pooh, pooh!' said Falcon: 'crying for nothing does a woman good.'

Christopher stared at him.

Falcon's spirits rose as they proceeded. He was like a boy let loose from school. His fluency, and charm of manner, served, however, to cheer a singularly dreary journey.

The travellers soon entered on a vast and forbidding region, that wearied the eye: at their feet a dull rusty carpet of dried grass and wild camomile, with pale red sand peeping through the burnt and scanty herbage. On the low mounds, that looked like heaps of sifted ashes, struggled now and then into sickliness a ragged, twisted shrub. There were flowers too, but so sparse, that they sparkled vainly in the colourless waste, which stretched to the horizon. The farmhouses were twenty miles apart, and nine out of them were new ones built by the Boers, since they degenerated into white savages: mere huts, with domed kitchens behind them. In the dwelling-house the whole family pigged together, with raw flesh drying on the rafters, stinking skins in a corner, parasitical vermin of all sorts blackening the floor, and particularly a small, biting, and odoriferous tortoise, compared with which the insect a London washerwoman brings into your house in her basket, is a stroke with a feather—and all this without the excuse of penury; for many of these were shepherd kings, sheared four thousand fleeces a year, and owned a hundred horses and horned cattle.

These Boers are compelled, by unwritten law, to receive travellers

and water their cattle; but our travellers, after one or two experiences, ceased to trouble them; for, added to the dirt, the men were sullen, the women moody, silent, brainless; the whole reception churlish. Staines detected in them an uneasy consciousness that they had descended, in more ways than one, from a civilized race; and the superior bearing of an European seemed to remind them what they had been, and might have been, and were not; so, after an attempt or two, our adventurers avoided the Boers, and tried the Kafirs. They found the savages socially superior, though their moral character does not rank high.

The Kafir cabins they entered were caves, lighted only by the door, but deliciously cool, and quite clean; the floors of puddled clay or ants' nests, and very clean. On entering these cool retreats, the flies, that had tormented them, shirked the cool grot, and buzzed off to the nearest farm to batten on congenial foulness. On the fat, round, glossy babies not a speck of dirt, whereas the little Boers were cakes thereof. The Kafir would meet them at the door, his clean black face all smiles and welcome. The women and grown girls would fling a spotless handkerchief over their shoulders in a moment, and display their snowy teeth, in unaffected joy, at sight of an Englishman.

At one of these huts, one evening, they met with something St. Paul ranks above cleanliness even, viz., Christianity. A neighbouring lion had just eaten a Hottentot *faute de mieux*; and these good Kafirs wanted the Europeans not to go on at night and be eaten for dessert. But they could not speak a word of English, and pantomimic expression exists in theory alone. In vain the women held our travellers by the coat tails, and pointed

to a distant wood. In vain Kafir *père* went on all-fours and growled sore. But at last a savage youth ran to the kitchen—for they never cook in the house—and came back with a brand, and sketched, on the wall of the hut, a lion with a mane down to the ground, and a saucer eye, not loving. The creature's paw rested on a hat and coat and another fragment or two of an European. The rest was foreshortened, or else eaten.

The picture completed, the females looked, approved, and raised a dismal howl.

'A lion on the road,' said Christopher, gravely.

Then the undaunted Falcon seized the charcoal, and drew an Englishman in a theatrical attitude, left foot well forward, firing a gun, and a lion rolling head over heels like a buck rabbit, and blood squirting out of a hole in his perforated carcase.

The savages saw, and exulted. They were so off their guard as to confound representation with fact; they danced round the white warrior, and launched him to victory.

'Aha!' said Falcon, 'I took the shine out of their lion, didn't I?'

'You did: and once there was a sculptor who showed a lion his marble group, a man trampling a lion, extracting his tongue, and so on; but report says, it did not convince the lion.'

'Why no; a lion is not an ass. But, for your comfort, there are no lions in this part of the world. They are myths. There were lions in Africa. But now they are all at the Zoo. And I wish I was there too.'

'In what character—of a discontented animal—with every blessing? They would not take you in; too common in England. Hallo! this is something new. What lots of bushes! We should

not have much chance with a lion here.'

'There are no lions: it is not the Zoo,' said Falcon; but he spurred on faster.

The country, however, did not change its feature; bushes and little acacias prevailed, and presently dark forms began to glide across at intervals.

The travellers held their breath, and pushed on; but at last their horses flagged; so they thought it best to stop and light a fire and stand upon their guard.

They did so, and Falcon sat with his rifle cocked, while Staines boiled coffee, and they drank it, and after two hours' halt, pushed on; and at last the bushes got more scattered, and they were on the dreary plain again. Falcon drew the rein, with a sigh of relief, and they walked their horses side by side.

'Well, what is become of the lions?' said Falcon, jauntily. He turned in his saddle, and saw a large animal stealing behind them with its belly to the very earth, and eyes hot coals; he uttered an eldrich screech, fired both barrels, with no more aim than a baby, and spurred away, yelling like a demon. The animal fled another way, in equal trepidation at those tongues of flame and loud reports, and Christopher's horse reared and plunged, and deposited him promptly on the sward; but he held the bridle, mounted again, and rode after his companion. A stern chase is a long chase; and for that or some other reason he could never catch him again till sunrise. Being caught, he ignored the lioness, with cool hauteur: he said he had ridden on to find comfortable quarters: and craved thanks.

This was literally the only incident worth recording that the companions met with in three hundred miles.

On the sixth day out, towards afternoon, they found, by inquiring, they were near the diamond washings, and the short route was pointed out by an exceptionally civil Boer.

But Christopher's eye had lighted upon a sort of chain of knolls, or little round hills, devoid of vegetation, and he told Falcon he would like to inspect these, before going farther.

'Oh,' said the Boer, 'they are not on my farm, thank goodness: they are on my cousin Bulteel's;' and he pointed to a large white house about four miles distant, and quite off the road. Nevertheless, Staines insisted on going to it. But first they made up to one of these knolls, and examined it; it was about thirty feet high, and not a vestige of herbage on it; the surface was composed of sand and of lumps of grey limestone very hard, diversified with lots of quartz, mica, and other old formations.

Staines got to the top of it, with some difficulty, and examined the surface all over. He came down again, and said, 'All these little hills mark hot volcanic action—why they are like boiling earth-bubbles—which is the very thing, under certain conditions, to turn carbonate of lime into diamonds. Now, here is plenty of limestone unnaturally hard; and, being in a diamond country, I can fancy no place more likely to be the matrix than these earth-bubbles. Let us tether the horses, and use our shovels.'

They did so; and found one or two common crystals, and some jasper, and a piece of chalcedony all in little bubbles, but no diamond. Falcon said it was wasting time.

Just then, the proprietor, a gigantic, pasty colonist, came up, with his pipe, and stood calmly looking on. Staines came down,

and made a sort of apology. Bulteel smiled quietly, and asked what harm they could do him, raking that rubbish. 'Rake it all away, mine vriends,' said he: 've shall thank you moch.'

He then invited them languidly to his house. They went with him, and, as he volunteered no more remarks, they questioned him, and learned his father had been a Hollander, and so had his vrow's. This accounted for the size and comparative cleanliness of his place. It was stuccoed with the lime of the country outside, and was four times as large as the miserable farmhouses of the degenerate Boers. For all this, the street door opened on the principal room, and that room was kitchen and parlour, only very large, and wholesome. 'But Lord,'—as poor dear Pepys used to blurt out—'to see how some folk understand cleanliness!' The floor was made of powdered ants' nests, and smeared with fresh cow-dung every day. Yet these people were the cleanest Boers in the colony.

The vrow met them, with a snow-white collar and cuffs of Hamburg linen, and the brats had pasty faces round as pumpkins, but shone with soap. The vrow was also pasty-faced, but gentle, and welcomed them with a smile, languid, but unequivocal.

The Hottentots took their horses, as a matter of course. Their guns were put in a corner. A clean cloth was spread, and they saw they were to sup and sleep there, though the words of invitation were never spoken.

At supper, sun-dried flesh, cabbage, and a savoury dish the travellers returned to with gusto. Staines asked what it was: the vrow told him—locusts. They had stripped her garden, and filled her very rooms, and fallen in heaps under her walls; so she had

pressed them, by the million, into cakes, had salted them lightly, and stored them, and they were excellent, baked.

After supper, the accomplished Reginald, observing a wire guitar, tuned it with some difficulty, and so twanged it, and sang ditties to it, that the flabby giant's pasty face wore a look of dreamy content over his everlasting pipe; and in the morning, after a silent breakfast, he said, 'Mine vriends, stay here a year or two, and rake in mine rubbish. Ven you are tired, here are springbok and antelopes, and you can shoot mit your rifles, and ve vill cook them, and you shall zing us zongs of Vaderland.'

They thanked him heartily, and said they would stay a few days, at all events.

The placid Boer went a-farming; and the pair shouldered their pick and shovel, and worked on their heap all day, and found a number of pretty stones, but no diamond.

'Come,' said Falcon, 'we must go to the river: and Staines acquiesced. 'I bow to experience,' said he.

At the threshold they found two of the little Bulteels, playing with pieces of quartz, crystal, etc., on the door-stone. One of these stones caught Staines's eye directly. It sparkled in a different way from the others: he examined it: it was the size of a white haricot bean, and one side of it polished by friction. He looked at it, and looked, and saw that it refracted the light. He felt convinced it was a diamond.

'Give the boy a penny for it,' said the ingenious Falcon, on receiving the information.

'Oh!' said Staines. 'Take advantage of a child?'

He borrowed it of the boy, and laid it on the table, after supper.

'Sir,' said he, 'this is what we were raking in your kopjes for, and could not find it. It belongs to little Hans. Will you sell it us? We are not experts, but we think it may be a diamond. We will risk ten pounds on it.'

'Ten pounds!' said the farmer. 'Nay, we rob not travellers, mine vriend.'

'But, if it is a diamond, it is worth a hundred. See how it gains fire in the dusk.'

In short, they forced the ten pounds on him, and next day went to work on another kopje.

But the simple farmer's conscience smote him. It was a slack time; so he sent four Hottentots, with shovels, to help these friendly maniacs. These worked away gaily, and the white men set up a sorting table, and sorted the stuff, and hammered the nodules, and at last found a little stone as big as a pea that refracted the light. Staines showed this to the Hottentots, and their quick eyes discovered two more that day, only smaller.

Next day, nothing but a splinter or two.

Then Staines determined to dig deeper, contrary to the general impression. He gave his reason: 'Diamonds don't fall from the sky. They work up from the ground; and clearly the heat must be greater farther down.'

Acting on this, they tried the next strata, but found it entirely barren. After that, however, they came to a fresh layer of carbonate, and here, Falcon hammering a large lump of conglomerate, out leaped, all of a sudden, a diamond big as a nut, that ran along the earth gleaming like a star. It had polished angles and natural facets, and even a novice, with an eye in his head, could see it was a diamond of the purest water. Staines and Falcon shouted with delight,

and made the blacks a present on the spot.

They showed the prize, at night, and begged the farmer to take to digging. There was ten times more money beneath his soil, than on it.

Not he. He was a farmer: did not believe in diamonds.

Two days afterwards, another great find. Seven small diamonds.

Next day, a stone as large as a cob-nut, and with strange and beautiful streaks. They carried it home to dinner, and set it on the table, and told the family it was worth a thousand pounds. Bulteel scarcely looked at it; but the wrow trembled and all the young folk glowered at it.

In the middle of dinner, it exploded like a cracker, and went literally into diamond-dust.

'Dere goes von tousand pounds,' said Bulteel, without moving a muscle.

Falcon swore. But Staines showed fortitude. 'It was laminated,' said he, and exposure to the air was fatal.'

Owing to the invaluable assistance of the Hottentots, they had in less than a month collected four large stones of pure water, and a wine-glassful of small stones, when, one fine day, going to work calmly after breakfast, they found some tents pitched, and at least a score of dirty diggers, bearded like the pard, at work on the ground. Staines sent Falcon back to tell Bulteel, and suggest that he should at once order them off, or, better still, make terms with them. The phlegmatic Boer did neither.

In twenty-four hours it was too late. The place was rushed. In other words, diggers swarmed to the spot, with no idea of law but digger's law.

A thousand tents rose like mushrooms; and poor Bulteel stood smoking, and staring amazed, at

his own door, and saw a veritable procession of waggons, Cape carts, and powdered travellers file past him to take possession of his hillocks. Him, the proprietor, they simply ignored; they had a committee, who were to deal with all obstructions, landlords and tenants included. They themselves measured out Bulteel's farm into thirty-foot claims, and went to work with shovel and pick. They held Staines's claim sacred—that was diggers' law; but they confined it strictly to thirty feet square.

Had the friends resisted, their brains would have been knocked out. However, they gained this, that dealers poured in, and, the market not being yet glutted, the price was good: Staines sold a few of the small stones for two hundred pounds. He showed one of the larger stones. The dealer's eye glittered, but he offered only three hundred pounds, and this was so wide of the ascending scale, on which a stone of that importance is priced, that Staines reserved it for sale at Cape Town.

Nevertheless, he afterwards doubted whether he had not better have taken it; for the multitude of diggers turned out such a prodigious number of diamonds at Bulteel's pan, that a sort of panic fell on the market.

These dry diggings were a revelation to the world. Men began to think the diamond, perhaps, was a commoner stone than any one had dreamed it to be.

As to the discovery of stones, Staines and Falcon lost nothing by being confined to a thirty-foot claim. Compelled to dig deeper, they got into a rich strata, where they found garnets by the pint, and some small diamonds, and at last, one lucky day, their largest diamond. It weighed thirty-seven carats, and was a rich yellow.

Now, when a diamond is clouded or off colour, it is terribly depreciated; but a diamond with a positive colour is called a fancy stone, and ranks with the purest stones.

'I wish I had this in Cape Town,' said Staines.

'Why I'll take it to Cape Town, if you like,' said the changeable Falcon.

'You will?' said Christopher, surprised.

'Why not? I'm not much of a digger. I can serve our interest better by selling. I could get a thousand pounds for this at Cape Town.'

'We will talk of that quietly,' said Christopher.

Now, the fact is Falcon, as a digger, was not worth a pin. He could not sort. His eyes would not bear the blinding glare of a tropical sun upon lime and dazzling bits of mica, quartz, crystal, white topaz, etc., in the midst of which the true glint of the royal stone had to be caught in a moment. He could not sort, and he had not the heart to dig. The only way to make him earn his half was to turn him into the travelling and selling partner.

Christopher was too generous to tell him this; but he acted on it, and said he thought his was an excellent proposal: indeed he had better take all the diamonds they had got, to Dale's Kloof first, and show them to his wife, for her consolation: 'And perhaps,' said he, 'in a matter of this importance, she will go to Cape Town with you, and try the market there.'

'All right,' said Falcon.

He sat and brooded over the matter a long time, and said, 'Why make two bites of a cherry? They will only give us half the value at Cape Town: why not go by the steamer to England, before

the London market is glutted, and all the world finds out that diamonds are as common as dirt?'

'Go to England! What, without your wife? I'll never be a party to that. Me part man and wife! If you knew my own story——'

'Why, who wants you?' said Reginald. 'You don't understand. Phœbe is dying to visit England again; but she has got no excuse. If you like to give her one, she will be much obliged to you, I can tell you.'

'Oh, that is a very different matter. If Mrs. Falcon can leave her farm —'

'Oh, that brute of a brother of hers is a very honest fellow, for that matter. She can trust the farm to him. Besides, it is only a month's voyage by the mail steamer.'

This suggestion of Falcon's set Christopher's heart bounding, and his eyes glistening. But he restrained himself, and said, 'This takes me by surprise; let me smoke a pipe over it.'

He not only did that, but he lay awake all night.

The fact is that for some time past, Christopher had felt sharp twinges of conscience, and deep misgivings as to the course he had pursued in leaving his wife a single day in the dark. Complete convalescence had cleared his moral sentiments, and, perhaps, after all, the discovery of the diamonds had co-operated; since now the insurance money was no longer necessary to keep his wife from starving.

'Ah!' said he; 'faith is a great quality; and how I have lacked it!'

To do him justice, he knew his wife's excitable nature, and was not without fears of some disaster, should the news be communicated to her unskillfully.

But this proposal of Falcon's made the way clearer. Mrs. Falcon, though not a lady, had all a lady's delicacy, and all a woman's tact and tenderness. He knew no one in the world more fit to be trusted with the delicate task of breaking to his Rosa that the grave, for once, was baffled, and her husband lived. He now became quite anxious for Falcon's departure, and ardently hoped that worthy had not deceived himself as to Mrs. Falcon's desire to visit England.

In short, it was settled that Falcon should start for Dale's Kloof, taking with him the diamonds, believed to be worth altogether three thousand pounds at Cape Town, and nearly as much again in England, and a long letter to Mrs. Falcon, in which Staines revealed his true story, told her where to find his wife, or hear of her, viz., at Kent Villa, Gravesend, and sketched an outline of instructions as to the way, and cunning degrees, by which the joyful news should be broken to her. With this he sent a long letter to be given to Rosa herself, but not till she should know all; and in this letter he enclosed the ruby ring she had given him. That ring had never left his finger, by sea or land, in sickness or health.

The letter to Rosa was sealed. The two letters made quite a packet; for, in the letter to his beloved Rosa, he told her everything that had befallen him. It was a romance, and a picture of love; a letter to lift a loving woman to heaven, and almost reconcile her to all her bereaved heart had suffered.

This letter, written with many tears from the heart that had so suffered, and was now softened by good fortune and bounding with joy, Staines entrusted to Falcon,

together with the other diamonds, and, with many warm shakings of the hand, started him on his way.

'But mind, Falcon,' said Christopher, 'I shall expect an answer from Mrs. Falcon in twenty days at farthest. I do not feel so sure as you do that she wants to go to England; and, if not, I must write to Uncle Philip. Give me your solemn promise, old fellow, an answer in twenty days—if you have to send a Kafir on horseback.'

'I give you my honour,' said Falcon, superbly.

'Send it to me at Bulteel's Farm.'

'All right. "Dr. Christie, Bulteel's Farm."

"Well—no. Why should I conceal my real name any longer from such friends as you and your wife? Christie is short for Christopher—that is my Christian name; but my surname is Staines. Write to "Dr. Staines."

'Doctor Staines!'

'Yes. Did you ever hear of me?'

Falcon wore a strange look. 'I almost think I have. Down at Gravesend, or somewhere.'

'That is curious. Yes, I married my Rosa there; poor thing! God bless her; God comfort her. She thinks me dead.'

His voice trembled, he grasped Falcon's cold hand, till the latter winced again, and so they parted, and Falcon rode off muttering, 'Doctor Staines! so then you are Doctor Staines.'

CHAPTER XXII.

Rosa Staines had youth on her side, and it is an old saying that youth will not be denied. Youth struggled with death for her, and won the battle.

But she came out of that ter-

rible fight weak as a child. The sweet pale face—the widow's cap, the suit of deep black—it was long ere these came down from the sick room. And, when they did, oh, the dead blank! The weary, listless life! The days spent in sighs, and tears, and desolation. Solitude! solitude! Her husband was gone, and a strange woman played the mother to her child before her eyes.

Uncle Philip was devotedly kind to her, and so was her father; but they could do nothing for her.

Months rolled on, and skinned the wound over. Months could not heal. Her boy became dearer and dearer, and it was from him came the first real drops of comfort, however feeble.

She used to read her lost one's diary every day, and worship, in deep sorrow, the mind she had scarcely respected, until it was too late. She searched in this diary to find his will, and often she mourned that he had written on it so few things she could obey. Her desire to obey the dead, whom, living, she had often disobeyed, was really simple and touching. She would mourn to her father that there were so few commands to her in his diary. 'But,' said she, 'memory brings me back his will in many things, and to obey is now the only sad comfort I have.'

It was in this spirit she now forced herself to keep accounts. No fear of her wearing stays now; no powder; no trimmings; no waste.

After the usual delay, her father told her she should instruct a solicitor to apply to the insurance company for the six thousand pounds. She refused with a burst of agony. 'The price of his life,' she screamed. 'Never! I'd live on bread and water sooner than touch that vile money.'

Her father remonstrated gently. But she was immovable. 'No. It would be like consenting to his death.'

Then Uncle Philip was sent for.

He set her child on her knee; and gave her a pen. 'Come,' said he, sternly, 'be a woman, and do your duty to little Christie.'

She kissed the boy, cried, and did her duty meekly. But, when the money was brought her, she flew to Uncle Philip, and said, 'There! there!' and threw it all before him, and cried as if her heart would break. He waited patiently, and asked her what he was to do with all that: invest it?

'Yes, yes; for my little Christie.'

'And pay you the interest quarterly.'

'Oh, no, no. Dribble us out a little as we want it. That is the way to be truly kind to a simpleton. I hate that word.'

'And suppose I run off with it? Such confiding geese as you corrupt a man.'

'I shall never corrupt you. Crusty people are the soul of honour.'

'Crusty people!' cried Philip, affecting amazement. 'What are they?'

She bit her lip and coloured a little; but answered adroitly,

They are people that pretend not to have good hearts, but have the best in the world; far better ones than your smooth ones: that's crusty people.'

'Very well,' said Philip; 'and I'll tell you what simpletons are. They are little transparent-looking creatures that look shallow, but are as deep as old Nick, and make you love them in spite of your judgment. They are the most artful of their sex; for they always achieve its great object, to be loved—the very thing that clever women sometimes fail in.'

'Well, and if we are not to be loved, why live at all—such useless things as I am?' said Rosa simply.

So Philip took charge of her money, and agreed to help her save money for her little Christopher. Poverty should never destroy him, as it had his father.

As months rolled on, she crept out into public a little; but always on foot, and a very little way from home.

Youth and sober life gradually restored her strength, but not her colour, nor her buoyancy.

Yet she was, perhaps, more beautiful than ever; for a holy sorrow chastened and sublimed her features: it was now a sweet, angelic, pensive beauty, that interested every feeling person at a glance.

She would visit no one; but, a twelvemonth after her bereavement, she received a few chosen visitors.

One day a young gentleman called, and sent up his card, 'Lord Tadcaster,' with a note from Lady Cicely Treherne, full of kindly feeling. Uncle Philip had reconciled her to Lady Cicely; but they had never met.

Mrs. Staines was much agitated at the very name of Lord Tadcaster; but she would not have missed seeing him for the world.

She received him, with her beautiful eyes wide open, to drink in every lineament of one who had seen the last of her Christopher.

Tadcaster was wonderfully improved: he had grown six inches out at sea, and, though still short, was not diminutive; he was a small Apollo, a model of symmetry, and had an engaging, girlish beauty, redeemed from downright effeminacy by a golden moustache like silk, and a tanned cheek that became him wonderfully.

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He seemed dazzled at first by Mrs. Staines, but murmured that Lady Cicely had told him to come, or he would not have ventured.

'Who can be so welcome to me as you?' said she, and the tears came thick in her eyes directly.

Soon, he hardly knew how, he found himself talking of Staines, and telling her what a favourite he was, and all the clever things he had done.

The tears streamed down her cheeks, but she begged him to go on telling her, and omit nothing.

He complied heartily, and was even so moved by the telling of his friend's virtues, and her tears and sobs, that he mingled his tears with hers. She rewarded him by giving him her hand as she turned away her tearful face to indulge the fresh burst of grief his sympathy evoked.

When he was leaving, she said, in her simple way, 'Bless you.'—'Come again,' she said: 'you have done a poor widow good.'

Lord Tadcaster was so interested and charmed, he would gladly have come back next day to see her; but he restrained that extravagance, and waited a week.

Then he visited her again. He had observed the villa was not rich in flowers, and he took her down a magnificent bouquet, cut from his father's hot-houses. At sight of him, or at sight of it, or both, the colour rose for once in her pale cheek, and her pensive face wore a sweet expression of satisfaction. She took his flowers, and thanked him for them, and for coming to see her.

Soon they got on the only topic she cared for, and, in the course of this second conversation, he took her into his confidence and told her he owed everything to Dr. Staines. 'I was on the wrong road altogether, and he put me right. To tell you the truth, I

used to disobey him now and then, while he was alive, and I was always the worse for it; now he is gone I never disobey him. I have written down a lot of wise, kind things he said to me, and I never go against any one of them. I call it my book of oracles. Dear me, I might have brought it with me.'

'Oh, yes; why didn't you?'—rather reproachfully.

'I will bring it next time.'

'Pray do.'

Then she looked at him with her lovely swimming eyes, and said tenderly, 'And so here is another that disobeyed him living, but obeys him dead. What will you think when I tell you that I, his wife, who now worship him, when it is too late, often thwarted and vexed him when he was alive?'

'No, no. He told me you were an angel, and I believe it.'

'An angel! a good-for-nothing, foolish woman—who sees everything too late.'

'Nobody else should say so before me,' said the little gentleman, grandly. 'I shall take his word before yours on this one subject. If ever there was an angel, you are one, and oh! what would I give if I could but say or do anything in the world to comfort you.'

'You can do nothing for me, dear, but come and see me often, and talk to me as you do—on the one sad theme my broken heart has room for.'

This invitation delighted Lord Tadcaster, and the sweet word 'dear,' from her lovely lips, entered his heart and ran through all his veins like some rapturous but dangerous elixir. He did not say to himself, 'She is a widow with a child, feels old with grief, and looks on me as a boy, who has been kind to her.' Such prudence and wariness were hardly to be expected from his age. He had

admired her at first sight, very nearly loved her at their first interview, and now this sweet word opened a heavenly vista. The generous heart that beat in his small frame burned to console her with a life-long devotion and all the sweet offices of love.

He ordered his yacht to Gravesend—for he had become a sailor—and then he called on Mrs. Staines, and told her, with a sort of sheepish cunning, that now, as his yacht happened to be at Gravesend, he could come and see her very often. He watched her timidly, to see how she would take that proposition.

She said, with the utmost simplicity, 'I'm very glad of it.'

Then he produced his oracles; and she devoured them. Such precepts to Tadcaster as she could apply to her own case she instantly noted in her memory, and they became her law from that moment.

Then, in her simplicity, she said, 'And I will show you some things, in his own hand-writing, that may be good for you: but I can't show you the whole book; some of it is sacred from every eye but his wife's. His wife's? Ah me! his widow's.'

Then she pointed out passages in the diary that she thought might be for his good; and he nestled to her side, and followed her white finger with loving eyes, and was in an Elysium—which she would certainly have put a stop to at that time, had she divined it. But all wisdom does not come at once to an unguarded woman. Rosa Staines was wiser about her husband than she had been, but she had plenty to learn.

Lord Tadcaster anchored off Gravesend, and visited Mrs. Staines nearly every day. She received him with a pleasure that was not at all lively, but quite undisguised.

He could not doubt his welcome; for once, when he came, she said to the servant, ‘Not at home,’ a plain proof she did not wish his visit to be cut short by any one else.

And so these visits and devoted attentions of every kind went on unobserved by Lord Tadcaster’s friends, because Rosa would never go out, even with him: but, at last, Mr. Lusignan saw plainly how this would end, unless he interfered.

Well, he did not interfere; on the contrary, he was careful to avoid putting his daughter on her guard: he said to himself, ‘Lord Tadcaster does her good. I’m afraid she would not marry him, if he was to ask her now; but in time she might. She likes him a great deal better than any one else.’

As for Philip, he was abroad for his own health, somewhat impaired by his long and faithful attendance on Rosa.

So now Lord Tadcaster was in constant attendance on Rosa. She was languid, but gentle and kind; and, as mourners, like invalids, are apt to be egotistical, she saw nothing but that he was a comfort to her in her affliction.

While matters were so, the Earl of Miltshire, who had long been sinking, died, and Tadcaster succeeded to his honours and estates.

Rosa heard of it, and, thinking it was a great bereavement, wrote him one of those exquisite letters of condolence a lady alone can write. He took it to Lady Cicely, and showed it her. She highly approved it.

He said, ‘The only thing—it makes me ashamed, I do not feel my poor father’s death more; but, you know, it has been so long expected.’ Then he was silent a long time; and then he asked her if such a woman as that would

not make him happy, if he could win her.

It was on her ladyship’s tongue to say, ‘She did not make her first happy;’ but she forbore, and said, coldly, that was maw than she could say.

Tadcaster seemed disappointed by that, and by-and-by Cicely took herself to task. She asked herself what were Tadcaster’s chances in the lottery of wives. The heavy army of scheming mothers, and the light cavalry of artful daughters, rose before her cousinly and disinterested eyes, and she asked herself what chance poor little Tadcaster would have of catching a true love, with a hundred female artists manœuvring, wheeling, ambuscading, and charging upon his wealth and titles. She returned to the subject of her own accord, and told him she saw but one objection to such a match: the lady had a son by a man of rare merit and misfortune. Could he, at his age, undertake to be a father to that son? ‘Othahwise,’ said Lady Cicely, ‘maak my words, you will quall over that poor child; and you will have two to quall with, because I shall be on her side.’

Tadcaster declared to her that child should be quite the opposite of a bone of contention. ‘I have thought of that,’ said he, ‘and I mean to be so kind to that boy, I shall make her love me for that.’

On these terms Lady Cicely gave her consent.

Then he asked her should he write, or ask her in person.

Lady Cicely reflected. ‘If you write, I think she will say no.’

‘But if I go?’

‘Then it will depend on how you do it. Rosa Staines is a true mourner. Whatever you may think, I don’t believe the idea of a second union has ever entered her head. But then she is very

unselfish: and she likes you better than any one else, I daresay. I don't think your title or your money will weigh with her now. But, if you show her your happiness depends on it, she may perhaps cry and sob at the very idea of it, and then, after all, say, "Well, why not—if I can make the poor soul happy?"'

So, on this advice, Tadcaster went down to Gravesend, and Lady Cicely felt a certain self-satisfaction; for her well-meant interference having lost Rosa one husband, she was pleased to think she had done something to give her another.

Lord Tadcaster came to Rosa Staines; he found her seated with her head upon her white hand, thinking sadly of the past.

At sight of him in deep mourning, she started, and said 'Oh!'

Then she said, tenderly, 'We are of one colour now,' and gave him her hand.

He sat down beside her, not knowing how to begin.

'I am not Tadcaster now. I am Earl of Miltshire.'

'Ah, yes; I forgot,' said she, indifferently.

'This is my first visit to any one in that character.'

'Thank you.'

'It is an awfully important visit to me. I could not feel myself independent, and able to secure your comfort and little Christie's, without coming to the lady, the only lady I ever saw,

that—oh, Mrs. Staines—Rosa—who could see you, as I have done—mingle his tears with yours, as I have done, and not love you, and long to offer you his love?'

'Love! to me, a broken-hearted woman, with nothing to live for but his memory and his child.'

She looked at him with a sort of scared amazement.

'His child shall be mine. His memory is almost as dear to me as to you.'

'Nonsense, child, nonsense!' said she, almost sternly.

'Was he not my best friend? Should I have the health I enjoy, or even be alive, but for him? Oh, Mrs. Staines—Rosa, you will not live all your life unmarried; and who will love you as I do? You are my first and only love; my happiness depends on you.'

'Your happiness depend on me! Heaven forbid—a woman of my age, that feels so old, old, old.'

'You are not old: you are young, and sad, and beautiful, and my happiness depends on you.' She began to tremble a little. Then he kneeled at her knees, and implored her, and his hot tears fell upon the hand she put out to stop him, while she turned her head away, and the tears began to run.

Oh! never can the cold dissecting pen tell what rushes over the heart that has loved and lost, when another true love first kneels and implores for love, or pity, or anything the bereaved can give.

(To be continued.)



EXTRACTS FROM A TRAVELLING BAG.

BY MAJOR H. BYNG-HALL, AUTHOR OF 'THE BRIC-À-BRAC HUNTER,' &c.

PARLIAMENTARY battles over, London Society—that is to say, the society which our Gaelic neighbours are wont to term the *beau monde*—take wing as the swallow, and fly north, south, east and west, some to the grouse hills of Scotland; others to the noble residences of the aristocracy—their unrivalled English homes; many to enjoy the fresh breezes of the ocean; and thousands, of all classes and professions, to foreign lands, who know little of their own; while many, as winter approaches, settle down for a time in the mis-called ‘enchanting capitals of Southern Europe,’ watered by the historic, though muddy Tiber, by the sparkling Adriatic Sea, or the ever calm and sunny Mediterranean.

Such, in fact, is the language which I have oftentimes heard expressed with regard to those outwardly fair cities of Southern France and Italy—at least by those who may perchance have lingered there for a brief season under the most agreeable circumstances, as during the finest weather. And they speak at the time words of truth, for such has been the impression left on their minds by that which they have seen; and such, indeed, are the opinions of travellers in general, when no untoward circumstance causes them to alter their opinions.

A well-cooked dinner, a cheerful room, a soft bed, a good breakfast, fair weather and health, civility and moderate charges, send away a guest charmed with his host and his hotel. The same hotel is visited under very different circumstances, and he who suffers from them condemns it for ever.

So is it with most things in active life. A good luncheon, and well-cooked mutton-chop, according to the taste of the eater; a good appetite at a buffet, at home or abroad, stamp, in the opinion of those so fortunate as to obtain it, the place and its productions.

Now, let us be just and truthful; let us take the rough with the smooth; let us look on places and people, not with the eye of prejudice and preference, but in fairness, untouched by romance. The ways of the world are oftentimes hard to decipher; yet this life is not always overcast, nor are all the seas of the South for ever calm.

For my part, I am only a hard-worked traveller from the rich and well-known commercial house of Downing and Co., general merchants, who have agents all over Europe, and relations of great importance with most capitals.

Old Downing, under whom I first served long years since, was one of the most kind, generous-minded, and liberal of masters. Alas! he is dead; but not forgotten by those he befriended. Young Downing, his successor, is no doubt clever and gentlemanlike, always well-dressed and polite; but he scarcely takes much interest in the travellers of his house, however great their labours, responsibilities, or physical sufferings; for be it known they are sent with orders during all times and seasons, over rough seas, and snow-clad mountains, braving the heats of Southern Europe, as the cold of Russia. Christmas Day, Good Friday, New Year's Day, or Black Monday, the interests of the house must be attended to, *coute qu'il coute*.

I make these observations in all

courtesy, being alive to the fact that my humble position, notwithstanding my long service, scarcely admits the slightest reference to my superiors. My desire is simply to show my readers that, for years, my duties to this great house have called me to every capital in Europe, as well as to various places which are not precisely capitals; my statements, therefore, as regards places and persons in general and particular, may be considered as practical and true, my principal object being the endeavour to convince my countrymen that the sun does not shine for ever out of England; that southern seas are not always calm; that flowers wither abroad, as at home; and that, take it for all in all, there is no climate throughout the year like that of Old England; no country where a man of moderate desires can live so cheaply, notwithstanding the present high price of food: in fact, there is no place like home. True that, in the month of late October, I have steamed in one of the vessels then, if I am not in error, named the 'Messagerie Impériale,' and now, I believe, entitled to the name of 'Messagerie Nationale,' from Marseilles to Constantinople. Throughout the voyage, the sea was as calm as a mill-pond, the weather as warm as July; and, to those who love the sea—which I do not, save to look at, and bathe in, and eat fish from, though I never suffer, as many do, from its dire effects—the voyage, on its termination, as we glided past the Seraglio Point, and anchored in front of the city of the Sultan at sunrise, and beheld a scene which I must admit, under such circumstances, is one of brilliancy and beauty, would have been termed delightful.

And yet, though in midsummer time I have met with calm seas

and sunshine, during the spring and winter, storms and seas more boisterous than those of the Atlantic or Bay of Biscay have assailed us: but let that pass.

I am now about to give a little historiette of a recent journey from the city of Victoria to that of Abdul Azzis, for the benefit of those desirous of visiting Constantinople at this season of the year. If dear old Downing were alive—God bless his memory!—he would have asked me to tell him, as he was wont, all about it; and having so told him, he would have said, 'Well, my boy, you shall be recompensed for your sufferings and dangers, if pecuniary recompence can soften their recollection, and add to the comforts of those who love you and mourned your absence.'

The night of my leaving England was one of dark and late November gloom; heavy rain was falling, as it had fallen several days previous, while almost a hurricane had blown throughout the week, and the Press was full of disasters by sea on the coast of England. Meanwhile, though I confess my ignorance of financial movements, I was aware, as all men ought to be, of things general and particular, that the Bank rate had risen—which has, I believe, a sort of barometrical effect on commercial affairs. Thiers had, also, again announced his intended resignation, if not allowed to do as he liked. Paris was in a fever; Republicans, Legitimists, Bonapartists, Radicals and Communists—meaning in some way or another, I conclude, though difficult for a humble commercial traveller to comprehend, peace, plenty, and the good of their country, or pillage and incendiaryism—were alive to coming events, when I was requested—which means commanded—to take some documents

doubtless of great importance, to the agent of Downing and Co. at Constantinople.

I confess my baggage was lighter than my heart, when, leaving home with Christmas in the advent, I put my pipe in my pocket—never forget your pipe, and a good supply of bird's-eye, when travelling,—bade adieu to my favourite cat, said good-night to Downing and Co., who wished me a ‘pleasant’ journey, as he smilingly went home, doubtless to a *recherché* dinner; and at 8.45 found myself *en route* for Dover. Ere I proceed, however, permit me to remark—I do so, not from ill-nature, but the public good,—that the buffet, or refreshment-room at the Charing Cross station*—I say nothing of the hotel, having never ate, drank, or slept therein—is one of the worst in Europe. Everything is bad or indifferent; served, doubtless, by most respectable females, mis-called ‘young ladies,’ continually changed or changing, who stare, and flirt with equally improperly called ‘young gentlemen,’ neglecting—at times almost ignoring—those who desire to be served, superintended by a middle-aged, stout, and amiable duenna, with her gold watch and chain, who may be generally seen partaking of a good lunch or dinner, and neglecting the young ladies under her charge. The buffet at Dover, also, though improved of late, is justly pronounced by foreigners

* I find, in a very pleasant article in the ‘Saturday Review,’ that the writer, speaking of ‘bars,’ or restaurants, as a matrimonial market, states that, for the most part, the ‘sandwiches and pork-pies’ are the same as they used to be—as related by Dickens in his description of Mugby Junction—terminating his witty and truthful article by saying, ‘That a man who gets a good wife from among the young women who serve at the bar, need not complain of a bad pork-pie, whatever others may be inclined to do.’

who arrive cold and sick on the shores of Old England as a disgrace.

Paris to Marseilles—whither I arrived in twenty-two hours, instead of sixteen as heretofore,—is a journey too well known to need comment. Arrived, once more I went on board one of the ‘Messagerie Nationale’ steamers, as they are now called, *en route* for the city of the Sultan, *via* Naples.

The night was dark, wet, and windy, and as I stood on the deck of the fine vessel, my pipe in my mouth, my thoughts far away—they rest, but ‘who cares?’—first on my home and my cat, and then on the responsible charge intrusted to me by the house of Downing and Co.—it was, in fact, such a night as a man’s thoughts, spite of his faith in his Redeemer, will fly back to home and those he loves, if he has a heart, though I doubt if a traveller to a commercial house of any dignity should have a heart.

We passed through the narrow entrance to the port called La Joliette, steamed passed the Château d’If, and soon put up the helm for Naples in the open sea. As I looked around me, and hearing the vessel named ‘Le Tage,’ the old song crossed my memory, ‘Fleuve du Tage,’—

‘Je quitte tes bords heureux,’

and I ardently wished myself on shore again, when I was aroused from my reverie by a most polite garçon, who informed me that dinner was served. Dinner? yes, I will go to dinner, suffering from mind and thought, not from the roughness of the sea. ‘Which is the worst, to be sick at heart or sick in the stomach?’ Let those who have suffered both answer the question. So to dinner I went. Could some of those who are forever vaunting the soft breezes of the South and the calm Medi-

terranean, have witnessed the subdued faces of most of those who sat around the board—or who endeavoured to sit and prevent their soup falling into their laps, now to save a bottle, now to save themselves, putting on an appearance of courage and contentment which they did not possess—I think many who leave a winter in old England for that of Southern France or Italy would remain at home at ease. However, we dined as best we could. The dinner card I enclose. The *menu* looks well on paper:—

Potage.
Pâte d'Italie.
Relève.
Côtelettes d'agneau.
Milanese.
Entrées.
Poisson à la Hollandaise.
Filet de bœuf aux champignons.
Rôti.
Bécasses.
Salade.
Légumes.
Petits Pois.
Entremet.
Beignet soufflé.
Dessert.

It would have looked far better on a damask table-cloth in a comfortable room ashore, instead of in a steamer's saloon with a tempestuous sea; and, indeed, it would have been excellent if properly cooked. By my side sat, or endeavoured to sit, a young English officer *en route* to enjoy two months' leave of absence—a very pleasant companion, who had never previously been abroad. I was glad to make his acquaintance. He held out bravely, whereas scarcely another person remained ten minutes at table, but rushed to their cabins, and never appeared again that wretched night. After undergoing all the miseries of a gale of wind for two days and three nights, we at length reached Naples; and I may

here remark, that the vessels of the 'Messageries Nationales,' or Impériales, or whatever their cognomen, handsome as they are, are far better to look at than to sail in, as they appear to me to be made only for fair weather, as are houses built, and everything else in the South, as if the sun shined for ever, the wind never blew, and the sea was eternally calm; moreover, although they carry mails and passengers who pay on or about the same price from Marseilles to Constantinople as from Liverpool to New York—in fact, more in comparison to time and distance—every one and everything is lost sight of for commercial gain and merchandise. Our captain was a kind and gallant officer who had previously served in the navy, and his officers did their duty calmly and well, considering the weather. But what, at times, can the care of the best of captains, officers, and engineers do against a hurricane, even on the so-called calm Mediterranean?

Thanks be to God, we are at length anchored safely in the unsafe harbour of Naples; some of the passengers who had never previously visited that bay, renowned for its undoubted beauty, looked anxiously towards Mount Vesuvius and the castle heights. But, alas! Vesuvius, though in good humour, was hid from view by dark clouds and fog thick enough for London to be proud of, and possibly to convince foreigners that there are fogs out of England. Moreover, the wind blew, and the waves, even of a tideless sea, broke on the shore with boisterous sounds. Comparatively safe and snug as we found ourselves, after an unusually long voyage from Marseilles, but little respite was allowed, for although many of us managed to get on shore, it was not without danger and difficulty.

that we returned to the ship ; indeed, some of the passengers decided on remaining entirely on dry land ; particularly a Russian gentleman and his young wife—a newly married couple, I fancy—who had intended to visit Athens and Constantinople, thence proceeding to Odessa, declared that nothing should induce them to go to sea again after the agonies they had suffered.

Downing and Co., however, who live at home at ease, pay slight attention to the dangers of the seas. For my part, therefore, a humble traveller from their house, I could only, in vulgar phraseology, 'grin and bear it,'—though in my heart of hearts I did most fondly hope our gallant captain would suppress his ardour and anxiety to proceed on his voyage, with the knowledge that seventy or eighty lives were possibly of more importance than the oil and merchandise, peculiar cocks and hens and parrots, which, together with the mails, he was conveying to Constantinople and the Sultan.

Alas ! our hopes for a quiet night were speedily at an end : click went the windlass, sharply whistled the wind. I endeavoured to smoke my pipe, ordered a little hot brandy-and-water, and affected a calmness I most unquestionably did not feel.

' You smoke and put on a cheerful face,' said a very pleasant, Greek gentleman from London ; ' but Englishmen are good sailors.'

' Good sailors or not,' I replied, ' we have been so knocked about for the last three nights, that I would remain here for this, moreover, assured am I, that we have worse weather ahead ; but to question the calculations of the commander of his own ship is as unwise as to contradict your wife, if you have one. Take my word,

however, we are in for it ; call for a glass of brandy-and-water, hot, with—, and think as little of it as I do ; put your trust in God ; He knows,' said I to myself, ' how much thought dwells on those I have left at home ;' for, although it was not the first time by fifty I had been at sea, truth, that precious word, told me I was disheartened. I admit it ; and so would you, readers of the 'London Society,' if you had been out that night on board the 'Tage' which subsequently became a 'fleuve.'

The anchor is up, the night dark and tempestuous, still the sea for a time was endurable ; but no sooner had we passed between the islands of Ischia and Capri, than a hurricane arose, such as I have never previously beheld on the Mediterranean, and never wish to feel again. Nevertheless, we pushed on through the night.

Alas ! what a night ! The gale, that is the hurricane, blew on to a lee shore—the waves, mountains high, overwhelming us, even penetrating the saloon ; our speed, two knots an hour. Having vainly endeavoured to rest, I crept out of my cabin, not hanging by my eyelids, but every fixture at hand, in order to ascertain the time, which marked 3.30 A.M. The ship was then pitching, rolling, groaning, and shivering as if every part of it would fly asunder ; so, creeping back, I endeavoured once more to repose, but in vain ; may be overcome, however, by fatigue—for nothing is more fatiguing than a heavy sea—I dozed for a time. A fearful crash, however, which sent everything flying, smashed the crockery in the steward's cabin, sent portmanteaus and passengers' belongings floating into the main saloon, induced me once more to rise, as best I could—it was then 5 A.M.—and I endeavoured to make my

way to the main deck. How frightful, yet how splendid the scene! the sea, mountains high, now flooding the decks, now breaking against the vessel's side; and yet I thought, and justly so, the ship, though rolling fearfully, was more at ease. Returning with difficulty to the saloon, I found my travelling companion, the Greek, and another gentleman, firmly fixed between the saloon-table and the only seat allowed for passengers on these so-called splendid vessels, endeavouring, by the aid of a spirit-lamp, to heat some coffee to which a small quantity of alcohol was wisely added, and of which they kindly proposed I should partake, to which I readily consented.

'Colonello meo,' said the Greek, 'we have had a spiteful night; happily the dawn is at hand. Let us smoke a pipe. The ship rolls heavily, but more smoothly; let us hope the worst is past.'

'I fear not,' replied his companion; 'our course is changed; the sea is as heavy, if not more so, than ever; we are doubtless running before the wind. Here is a compass; our course is south; we are going north; we may be pooped.'

On hearing this extremely agreeable assertion, I crept once more to the entrance of the deck, and true enough, we had changed our course, which accounted for the fearful battering the vessel had received, as I believe, being in great danger; a portion of the bulwarks having been driven in and her deck flush to the waves of the sea. The scene, if one of splendour, was not less fearful to look at: the crest of the waves, which followed us rapidly, appeared each moment as about to engulf us; but thanks to a merciful Providence, about mid-day we got into the Bay of Castella-

mare. We might, however, as well have remained in the open sea, for the hurricane still continued; and although we cast out two anchors, they would not hold. Towards the afternoon, however, the wind somewhat abated, and we crept across to Naples—from whence I telegraphed to Downing and Co., expressing my regret that the elements had detained me, hoping they would believe I had no control over them; also that my Sunday coat, best boots, and some valuable MSS. were destroyed. The reply was a telegram: 'We hope the papers to which you allude were personal property, and not those in which you were charged for the house.'

After a night's, and the best part of a day's tolerable repose in what was always the indifferently protected harbour of Naples, in which a Turkish and American frigate lay near us, the captain gave the order for getting under way again. Previous to starting, however, let me tell my readers that the memory of that visit to Naples, where on many and many occasions I had passed days, and even weeks, under a blue sky and calm weather, will never be obliterated from my mind. The light-house, to mark the entrance to the harbour, had been utterly cast away by the storm of the previous night, and, sad to relate, many living souls perished therein. The whole of the mole, which had been built at an enormous expense, and which for thirty years had stood firm against the storms of winter, which, if not lasting, rage at times in the Mediterranean, was swept away as if it had been formed of reeds; while, both at Castellamare and Naples, the fearful wreck of coasting vessels, boats, and property was fearful. Indeed, the sight was one to create deep sorrow in the heart that

looked upon it; and when I add that the tideless ocean broke even into the garden of the Villa Real, those who know it, and they are legion, will be enabled to form some judgment of what a hurricane is when raging on the placid Mediterranean.

But we are off again, with renewed hopes and fairer weather. A tolerably calm night—calm, I may say, to one who suffers not from the sea—and sleep, the best restorer to mind and body granted by a merciful God, brought all on deck, ere the sun had been long on the horizon, with thankful hearts and renewed spirits, to welcome one of the most glorious mornings I ever beheld, even in the South—a clear blue sky, a calm blue sea, the interesting Straits of Messina, a league before us Stromboli, and the Lipari Islands standing out clear from the ocean, Etna, snow-capped, without cloud or mist to intercept the distant view—in fact, precisely one of those mornings which, even in mid-winter, are not seldom to be met with in southern climes, and which lead those of old England and elsewhere to believe it is ever so. The weather continuing glorious, the sea calm as a mill-pond, with a sun warm as July, it was pleasant to behold the cheerful faces gathered on the deck: where some of them emerged from it would be difficult to say; whether they had been concealed in the hold or where, who can say? Among these were five or six sisters of charity—whom I always consider, in the majority, an honour to their sex—who had brought out their prayer-books, and knitting, and were working on deck, in the full enjoyment of the sunshine and the calm. I was informed that French sailors are superstitious, and by no means regard either priests or sisters of charity pleasantly on board ship;

at all events, I was told that during the tempest we had happily passed through they had prayed, and fervently, to some well-loved saint—who he was I know not, and I confess to have not a tittle of regard for saints—but I have no doubt, through whatever medium they prayed, their prayers, if from the heart, were heard. At all events, from the hour we quitted the Straits of Messina till that of our arrival in the harbour of the Princes, the weather and the comfort of our voyage did much to compensate us for what we had previously suffered. Bright and beautiful was the morning of our arrival; and as we lay for a few hours in that excellent harbour, surrounded by vessels of war from many nations during our short stay, we had the good fortune to witness a very pleasant and, I may add, pretty scene; for his Majesty the King of Greece and his amiable queen, with a very small escort, embarked at the early hour of 8.30 on board a Greek man-of-war for Corinth, whither they shortly proceeded to meet the uncle of the king, who had come from Denmark on a visit to the Grecian court; consequently, the ships were manned, decorated, salutes fired, and bands played; and without prejudice or affectation, I am compelled to assert that the remarkable quickness of the men on board an English corvette surpassed all those of France, Russia, or Greece. Having ascended from their barge on board the royal iron-clad—a handsome vessel, if iron-clads can ever be termed handsome—both king and queen, plainly dressed, and with the most perfect courtesy and simplicity and goodness, stood on the main deck, and bowed repeatedly to those gathered around the ship to see them depart. The moment

they were under way, orders were given for us to start again, which we did, with a bright sky above and a calm sea below; and, as we steamed rapidly onwards, we were again gratified by the sight of a division of the French fleet, consisting of five iron-clads, on their way to the Piræus, which passed us in the Ægean Sea. Thus favoured by wind and weather, we entered the Dardanelles early the following morning, and soon after sunset dropped our anchor at the entrance of the Golden Horn, thankful to God, who had saved us from the dangers of the sea, and equally thankful for the splendid contrast of the weather during the last few days of our voyage.

The Turkish authorities, having due respect for Downing and Co., permitted their agent to land at once, though such is not usually

the case as regards passengers. They appeared thankful, however, at the arrival of the mail steamer, which many believed had been lost. Glad I was to deliver my charge and once more lay my head on a soft pillow in an airy room, after the tossing and danger we had experienced.

If this simple, but truthful journal from my travelling bag should interest those who desire to visit the East, I shall be happy to give them a fresh, but not uninteresting, account of a journey homewards *via* the lonely Island of Corfu, Brindisi, Bologna, the Mont Cenis Tunnel, to Paris and old England, to enjoy that which I never expected—a calm Christmas among loved ones at home, forgetful of the discomfort of the past, and looking forward with courage to the future.

BEFORE THE GLASS.

HER maiden twines the rainbow pearls
About her golden hair,
While loosely yet some wayward curls
 Caress her forehead fair ;
Then clasps around her graceful throat
 More pearls on velvet warm :
Ah ! never yet did white robes float
 About so sweet a form.

She rises ; towards the mirror tall
 She turns her satined feet,
Her glances quickly rise and fall,
 So fair a sight to meet ;
The gentle blushes come and go
 As eyelids droop and lift,
For, ah ! she cannot choose but know
 She has the fatal gift.

Will knowledge make her wise in time,
 And teach her that her dower
Is fruitful source of many a crime,
 Has victims every hour ?
Go, Ethel, win in beauty's race,
 Remembering ere you start,
Unlovely is the loveliest face
 That hides a truthless heart.

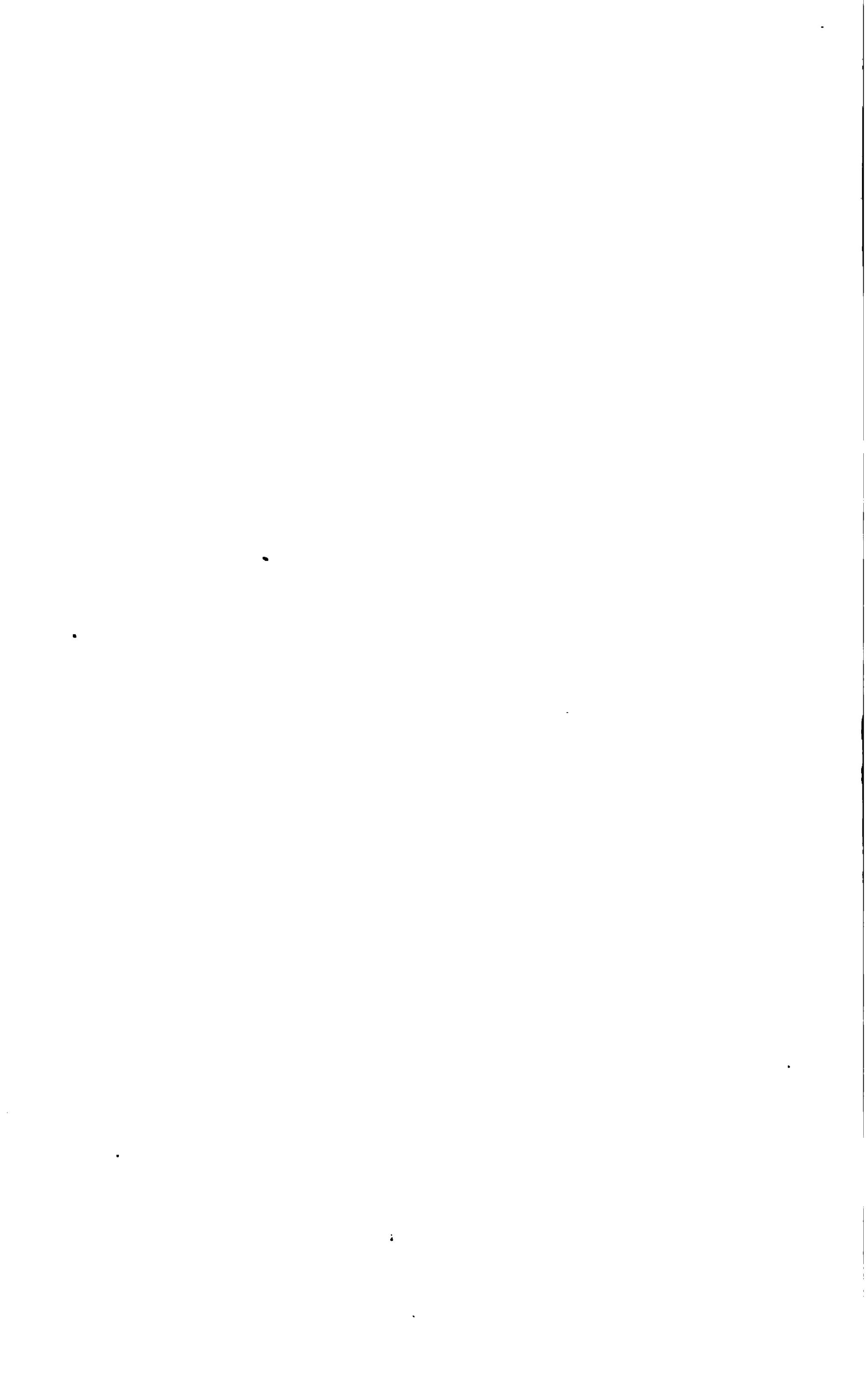
CHARLES LAWRENCE YOUNG.





Drawn by R. Newcombe.)

"BEFORE THE GLASS."



SOME THOUGHTS ON BRETON PARDONS.

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ASSUREDLY the sweetest opera of Meyerbeer is that known to 'London Society' by the name of the heroine of the story—Dinorah. That sweet music seems to breathe all the pathos and poesy of the Breton character: a character which is stamped on all they do—their religious gatherings, and festivals, and political organizations, no less than in their simple duties and daily life. To have caught this poetry of their nature and the manner of its expression; to have put it before us under a form at once popular and attractive; to

We are wearied with the clash of orchestra, the braying of trumpets, the pomp and circumstance of the 'spectacle' opera—'Jean of Leyden' and his inevitable March. We are shocked and scandalized beyond measure at those naughty nuns who, in a metapsychoisis, let us hope, unknown to any system of theology, suddenly develop into blooming coryphées—or perhaps for wearing very short hair, and very long gowns, and very high neck-gear in this life, are doomed to wear very long hair, and very short gowns, and to appear *affreusement décolletées* in another.

We are palled by that ghastly array of coffins seen through an open door to the accompaniment of dying shrieks, while a lady and gentleman have recognised in each other a fond parent and a long lost son, under circumstances even more unusual than those under which a certain old lady identified her first-born by feeling the tips of his ears—he lying in a dark room, having gone to bed in his clothes. We have not yet heard, at least in London, ‘Lohengrin;’ besides, I am speaking of the music of the past, not of the future, to which I believe M. Wagner’s work belongs—and this by the way, without any uncharitable *double-entendre* in regard of Mr. Gye’s promises for last season. And then that dreadful struggle which concludes that finest, most glorious and splendid of all operas, and which I confess I never could understand, unless Mozart thought (as, indeed, he well might) that beyond his exquisite harmonies it was impossible to go, in a way ‘après lui le déluge’ ‘chaos’ should ‘come again,’ and society, after listening to ‘Il mio tesoro,’ or ‘Vedrai carino,’ might go to roost for ever:

‘The dead shall live, the living die,
And music shall untune the sky.’

Well, after all this, I say the story and the sweet music of ‘Dinorah’ is very refreshing; and if we are not wholly absorbed by the pathetic tale of the heroine, it is all because of the freshness of the music, its thrilling harmonies and cadences, and the brief insight we are given into the ways of a simple and interesting people. For, doubtless, few who have had the good fortune to visit and to carry away not a few pleasant recollections from that old-world country will listen to Meyerbeer’s charming melodies without reminiscences to which the sweet ‘Shadow Dance’

may be a fitting echo. But I wonder how many who are familiar with the opera, ever think that the ‘Pardon de Ploermel’ is a living reality in this prosaic nineteenth century of ours, and, indeed, many another ‘Pardon’ too; that the simple folk in their quaint national costume, the picturesque procession, are still to be seen, and that half-sad cadence of the popular hymns is still to be heard in the length and breadth of the Bas Bretagne; and I must say—*crede experio*—the reality is far, far more touching, more beautiful than its representation could ever be.

And so, after the noise and bustle of town life; the wear-and-tear of business; the excitement of artificial enjoyments—whereof one has said that ‘life would be endurable but for its amusements,—out of the dust, and heat, and din of the City; out of the crowded atmosphere of ‘society,’ where better to take refuge than in some quiet, out-of-the-world village in Brittany, living among its people, observing them, drawing what lessons we might from them, and joining all we could in their simple but hearty festivities?

Now the Breton people is essentially a religious people. I do not mean that they are for ever singing psalms, or always saying their prayers, or even always going to church—though they do a fair amount in that way; nor, again, that they are, as a people, utterly free from all manner of vice, though I must confess they will pass muster on most counts. But their religion is with them a matter of national tradition and observance, and is mixed up with everything they do. Their political principles are biassed by their religious opinions; their loyalty is the outcome of their faith; and we have seen that when they have risen, it has been in a species of

religious warfare. The ancient faith of his fathers is to the Breton a family heirloom and a national possession. He is as proud of it as he is of the 'Kriesker,'* like which, it seems to him ever to point heavenward; and it is immovable and enduring as the Menhir of his beloved fatherland. Hence it is that their popular festivities occur simultaneously with the festivals of the Church, and are combined with these latter. These are the famous Pilgrimages or 'Pardons.' This latter title they derive from the 'Indulgence' (or communication of those spiritual favours and graces of which the Roman Church claims to be the custos, in the form of a 'Pardon,' or remission of ancient canonical penance), which is offered to all who attend devoutly these festivals. As the observance of confession, and the reception of the Sacrament, are held to be essential to obtaining the spiritual benefits of an 'Indulgence,' it is evident that the original intention of these 'Pardons' recurring at stated intervals, must have been—at least, so far as their religious part is concerned—akin to the spirit in which, some few years back, certain London clergymen conceived, and carried out, the idea of the 'Twelve-days' Mission.' In fact, a sort of general mending of morals and furbishing-up of good resolutions: and that by way of a merry popular festival, to the time of a rustic dance and the tune—if tune it may be called—of an Armorican 'Biniou.'

As far as I am aware, the Pardons take place chiefly about the months of July and August, though there are some, I believe, during the month of May; and last December, the bishops of Brittany,

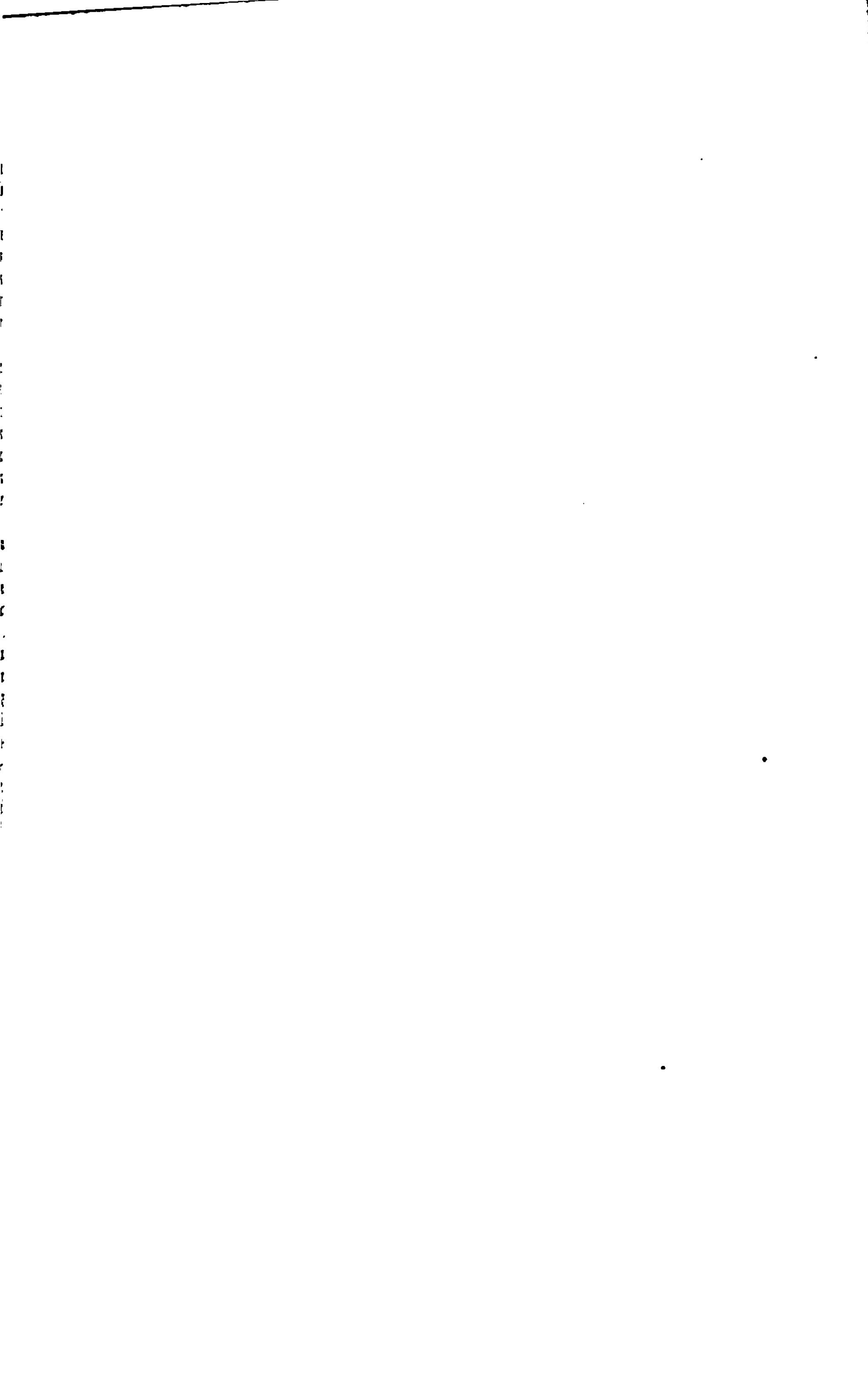
* The 'Kriesker' is a famous spire at St. Pol de Leon, of great height and beauty. The word signifies 'Middle Town.'

unwilling to be behind their brethren in prayers for the good of the nation, organised a great pilgrimage to Sainte Anne d'Auray, at which over ten thousand pilgrims assisted. They are very similar in character and general idea; so that I may content myself with a few notes on the more celebrated, in order to give my readers a general idea of what they are like; for it is especially at these Pardons, if we wish really to study them, that we should see the Bretons. The Pardons of Guingamp, Sainte Anne de la Palue, and Sainte Anne d'Auray, are the chief ones; the latter, however, being the most celebrated and most numerously attended. It is in a way central to the whole of Brittany, as the others are of their respective districts, to which they serve as the models and types of the lesser Pardons. Beside these, the Pardons of St. Jean du Doigt of Moncouteau, of Ploermel, and Le Folgoet are exceedingly well worth a visit, particularly the latter; where an extremely lovely legend, eminently poetical and Breton, has been the cause of a most beautiful and wonderful church rising amid the most desolate of moorlands conceivable.

Many of my readers will be familiar with the Pardon of Guingamp, from some entertaining articles on the subject which appeared, some two years back, in the 'Standard,' among their author's most 'happy thoughts.' I cannot, however, pass over altogether, in a notice of the Breton Pardons, that of 'Madame Marie of Good Help, at Guingamp, Madame Marie, the fairest star in the firmament.' And also because the interior of the beautiful and singular church where it takes place forms the subject of my picture. I will briefly recapitulate what has been far better said by others. The

Pardon commences on the Saturday immediately preceding the first Sunday in July. The square, an irregular but picturesque open space in the centre of the town, surrounded by tall gabled houses, many with curiously-carved fronts, many of great antiquity, and black with age, is decorated in honour of the festival and in preparation for the procession which makes the tour of the 'Place' before entering the shrine of Notre Dame de Bon Secours. Three tall masts bearing on an escutcheon the name of Mary, or one of her titles, have been erected at intervals. At their bases are piled huge bonfires, which are lit during the festivities, and which serve to augment the general illumination. This, I must own, with the writer of the 'Standard,' was not quite up to the mark; but I cannot share his views as to the decoration within the church. This appeared to me particularly effective. The slender garlands of lamps, the trophies of gay-coloured streamers and wreaths of green were admirably disposed; and though I have ventured in my sketch to remove some of the party-coloured bannerets which depended from the upper arcades of the nave, in order to show the rich and beautiful character of the architecture, the effect of their tiers of delicate pink and white drapery—in contrast to the solemn grey hue of the stone-work, was most telling. Above the chancel arch was the 'Atchievement' of the reigning pope, 'Mastai' quartering 'Ferretti,' with the well-known symbol of the cross-keys, and above the triple tiara and beneath a scroll with the words, 'Au Pontife Infaillible,—Respect—Soumission—Obéissance.' The church is full of rich furniture of an artistic character, and the light falls through its vista of arches

and slender columns from some of the finest stained glass I have ever seen. The effect, when the vast naves and aisles were filled with a silent crowd of worshippers, and the sunlight stole in through the painted windows across the incense-laden air, was impressive in a high degree. A fair is held in the square during the Pardon and a merry sight it is. At nine, however, in the evening, the long procession starts from the church, the pilgrims, near six thousand in number, take part in it, bearing lighted tapers; the typical ship is carried by sailors, and there is the usual array of banners: from this moment the religious festival commences. The pilgrims, who not unfrequently have travelled a distance to attend the Pardon, may be seen in crowds on their knees in prayer, or sitting quietly on the steps of our Lady's Chapel, until far into the night. Meanwhile, within the church, confessions are being heard. Early in the morning, before, I am forced to own, most tourists are out of bed, mass is celebrated, and the pilgrims receive the Holy Communion; the remainder of the day is spent in quiet recreation or in the church. Before I leave the subject of Guingamp, a word as to its extraordinary and beautiful church. It was originally one of five, its sister churches having fallen a prey to the fury of the Revolutionary party in 1789. It is in several styles, portions of it dating as early as the thirteenth century. It owes its splendour and importance, however, to Pierre II., Seigneur de Guingamp, the husband of the 'Bienheureuse' Françoise d'Amboise, who, in the fifteenth century, was the superior of the 'Frérie Blanche,' a pious association, who were the guardians of







... chapelle or venerable image of Notre Dame de Bon Secours. These worthies chose as their ensign a triple cord knotted, with the device—

‘Fun tri neud a vec’ez torrer;’

which, for the uninitiated, I translate freely, that, ‘a triple cord is hardly broken;’ the triple cord being intended to symbolise the three orders of the nation, to wit, the clergy, the nobility, and the people. In his charming life of ‘Françoise d’Amboise,’ M. le Vicomte de Kersabiec tells us that hither to Guingamp, in January 1443, Pierre de Guingamp brought his gentle and saintly princess; and that he made a foundation, in the words of the old chronicle, ‘Affin d’estre participant aux bien faictz pardons et prières qui chasque jour se font en la ditte chapelle pour le salutz de son alme pour ces causes et aultres a luy mouvant.’ Françoise d’Amboise was, on her mother’s side, of royal Breton descent; but it is to the period of a much greater Lady of Brittany, and probably to her munificence, that we must attribute much of the splendour of Notre Dame de Guingamp. To the age of Anne of Brittany belong the arches and curious ‘triforia’ seen in my sketch, on the southern side of the nave. The western portal, too, belongs to her time, and is a marvel of richness and sculpture. The situation of Guingamp is delightful. Mr. Jephson, in his entertaining ‘Walking Tour in Brittany,’ gracefully describes it as ‘a brilliant set in a carcanet of emerald and gold.’

About twelve miles from Châteaulin is Plouvenez-Porzay, near which is the shrine of Sainte Anne de la Palue. The present church is a modern erection, but the pilgrimage is of great antiquity: indeed, its exact origin is unknown,

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though the peasants are wont to say of their Sainte Anne, ‘Elle est la mère de sainte Anne d’Auray, aussi elle est bien plus puissante.’ But this, I own, is a flight of the imagination suggesting an hypothesis which transcends even the limits of the miraculous. There is a famous American combination (where else could such an idea originate?) by which a man legally becomes his own grandfather; but to be one’s own mother would exceed the powers—pace the good folk of Finisterre—of Sainte Anne de la Palue. The Pardon here takes place on the last Sunday in August, and begins, as usual with the great procession, on the preceding evening. The scene of the pilgrimage being much more rural, the festivities are quite of an out-door character, the camping out of the pilgrims being an especial feature. It is said, too, that here are to be seen the most complete and finest array of the ancient national Breton costume, as the districts where the patriotic manners and customs are most firmly rooted always muster in great numbers at the Pardon of Sainte Anne de la Palue.

The author of that splendid work, ‘La Bretagne Contemporaine,’ thus describes the scene:—

‘Le soir l’aspect change. Les pèlerins, ayant accompli leurs voeux à plus d’une sorte et fait à genoux nus le tour de la chapelle, campent sous une multitude de tentes. Rien de plus propre à exalter l’âme qu’une belle nuit d’été passée au pieux bivouaque de Sainte-Anne. Ces pénitants agenouillés qui psalmodient et se pressent contre les portes de l’église; ces cantiques qui résonnent sous chacune des tentes éclairées de mille feux—tout respire un parfum religieux, une fra-

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ternité chrétienne qui rappelle les premiers âges de la chrétienté.'

But we must hurry on. The road to Auray, the last 'station' in this our rapid pilgrimage, lies along the line from Châteaulin to Nantes. Soon after passing Châteaulin, we reach the fine and pleasantly-situated episcopal city of Quimper. A rest there, and a visit to its beautiful cathedral, whose elegant and lofty twin steeples rise with such grace above the town, will well reward the traveller. Here it was that, as I journeyed in the direction of Sainte Anne d'Auray last July, I began to fall in with the tide of pilgrims on their way to the Pardon. The first and second-class carriages contained a fair proportion, but it was in the wide third-class compartments where one realised what it was to be 'en pelerinage,' in spite of the seeming inappropriateness of the mode of transit. Albeit, pilgrims do not disdain the service of the iron horse. Here one saw the father of the family, a well-to-do farmer, perhaps, with his wife and one or more of his little ones, who, when they are men, no doubt will take their children on the same journey as their fathers were taken by their grandfathers. And there are the newly-married couple going to ask Sainte Anne's blessing on the newly-founded hearth; and the old grandfather and grandmother who have gone so oft before, and now, perhaps for the last time, are going once more to commit those they leave behind to the Bonne Mère Anne; and there are plenty of young ecclesiastics; a sailor or two from Brest, weatherbeaten and brown; pauvre 'Pitou,' the raw recruit, whose unmistakably Breton countenance we recognise under his newly-donned kapi, and than whose heart there beats no truer

to fatherland under the soldier's coat in France. We honour him, and so we do his older brother in arms who goes with him, and who has scars won in the dear cause to show Sainte Anne this time he comes to thank Heaven and her he has lived to see her shrine once more. And there is the quiet shepherd of sheep—the curé of the parish, in his short cassock,

going to pray for himself and his flock. How cheerfully and gaily he exchanges a few words with his fellow-travellers! He belongs to their order and one of themselves, and his sacred office only raises him above them as a father is above his children. We catch him in a moment of repose, 'dix minutes d'arrêté,' it may be, as he is quietly reading, unmoved by the babble and confusion around him. And so we arrive at Auray, where there is an excellent hotel, at which we repose for the night, for the Pardon takes place some four miles out of the town. And here

I pause to say a few words on the origin of the pilgrimage, at least, so far as I am able.

The foundation of a chapel on this spot dedicated in honour of Sainte Anne dates from the seventh century of the Christian era; but it was not until so late as the sixteenth that, owing to certain manifestations (so runs the legend), the image (the remains of which are still to be seen in the church) was discovered. The exertions of a pious peasant, named Nicolaiz, led to the foundation of a new chapel, and it soon became a famous and popular place of pilgrimage, visited, according to the records in stained glass in the modern church, by several distinguished personages, chiefly unfortunate—from our own poor queen, Henrietta Maria, down to an exalted personage whose devotions here and elsewhere brought him, let us trust, some consolation when, a few weeks back, he closed a great career on a bed of suffering—an exile, in a foreign land. Well, the Revolution, as might be expected, of course, turned the poor Carmelite fathers who had charge of the church, out of the place, and with them Sainte Anne. The ancient image was burnt, a portion only being rescued by a brave peasant. There is a touching picture of this scene in one of the painted windows, where, also, the poor peasants are shown praying and weeping outside the closed doors of their favourite church. With the Restoration, Sainte Anne again took possession of her church, which, for some time, remained under the care of the Jesuit fathers. The fathers of that order were replaced, a few years back, by a seminary of secular clergy, who are building a fine new church, much in that essentially bran-new style, of which

visitors to Paris may find such a brilliant example at the top of the Rue du Chaussée d'Antin. It is fondly believed to be the 'style François I^{er}'; it is undoubtedly the 'style Napoléon III.' It rose with the second empire, and surely could flourish nowhere out of it.

There is a little court or green before the church. This was entirely surrounded by booths and stalls for the sale of small 'objets de piété,' pious pictures, statuettes and medals of Sainte Anne, rosaries, and long tapers to burn before the shrine; 'tapers' which were really such, and decorated with beautiful little frills and flowers of wax; there were children's toys, trinkets, and Legitimist emblems in plenty. Outside this court the wares exposed for sale were of a more substantial and mundane nature withal—pots and pans, ribbons and laces, brushes and mats, and hardware. And there was a wonderful exhibition, outside which I heard a man frantically inviting the beholders to come and see the siege of Paris by M. le Général Garibaldi—an historical fact, I own, as yet unknown to me. This worthy showman had a gigantic canvas which flapped and jerked in an ostentatious way, and on which were depicted sundry ghastly and bloodthirsty pictures. The good people, however, seemed perfectly satisfied, and no doubt thought the Prussians the cause of all this woe, and dreadfully wicked and ungodly people—as, indeed, I am sure I should like to believe them, if they had to endure one-half the horrors exhibited by this rustic Vernet. Shortly after three, the sounds of a brass band gave notice that the procession, the opening ceremony of the Pardon, was about to begin, and all hurried in the direction of the church. As the cross which preceded it passed

under the portal of the church, the immense crowd assembled outside divided to let those who had a special function to perform in it pass on; then the pilgrims, two and two, fell in, and the vast cortége pressed forward. The quiet, earnest devotion of these simple people was beyond description; not ten minutes ago all was life and gaiety in the little fair, people passing hither and thither, laughing and chatting gaily, making purchases of mementoes of the Pardon or pressing up to the open doors of the church. Now all was quiet and decorum; not a voice rose to break the quaint harmony of the Litany of Sainte Anne, which was chanted in alternate strophes by the immense crowd. There were, of course, the usual amount of banners and gonfalons, and a large statue of Sainte Anne with the Blessed Virgin. Between the strophes of the Litany the band played a lively march. After making the circuit of the church and precincts, the procession arrived at the foot of the 'Scala Sancta,' a curious erection, consisting of an open recessed chapel, raised some twenty feet from the ground. The platform of the chapel is reached by a covered flight of stairs on either side, and contains an altar and representation of the Crucifixion, with the weeping Madonna and St. John beside. Part of the observance of the Pardon is to ascend these steps kneeling, saying a prayer at each step; and great numbers of pilgrims I saw performing this singular, and by no means agreeable, devotional exercise. At the Scala Sancta a short sermon was given by a barefooted Capuchin friar, after which, the Benediction was given, the immense crowd kneeling the while and joining devoutly in the hymns of the ritual. It

is quite impossible for me to describe the impression such a scene as this must produce; one may see crowds and street preaching and psalm-singing enough, but to see a whole crowd as one man engaged in prayer, and a crowd gathered from all classes and orders of society, with the green trees around and the blue heavens above, is a thing, once seen, to be forgotten never. I have chosen this as the subject of my vignette heading. As night closed in, the peasantry retired to their tents, those who were so fortunate as to have rooms in the little cabarets betaking themselves thither. But till a late hour the church was thronged with worshippers; and in the confessionals, the clergy were busy preparing the penitents for the festival of the morrow. Long before dawn the pilgrims were astir, and by half-past three the little streets of the town were again filled. At four o'clock mass was celebrated, and a vast number of pilgrims approached the sacrament. Masses were said at all the altars in the church from six o'clock until eight, when the Bishop of Vannes celebrated and gave the Communion to a great number of persons. At nine there was a high mass sung to simple Gregorian music, in which many of the congregation joined heartily. At length the words 'Ite missa est,'—which are, I own, somewhat equivalent to what Mr. Dickens called the delightful words 'And now,'—sounded from the altar, and, after an enthusiastic burst from the rustic orchestra, placed nearer me than I could have wished, the crowd once more streamed forth into the square. Shortly after three in the afternoon vespers were sung, and the Benediction of the Sacrament given, but already the greater number of pilgrims were

on their way home, and groups might be seen dotting the high-road leading from the church, still holding their rosaries in their hands, engaged in prayer or chatting quietly with their friends and relatives. The happy impression, however, of the Pardon of Sainte Anne d'Auray lasted long after I had looked with almost a lingering eye at her image surmounting the little railway station of the pilgrimage as we steamed away, and it was soon lost amid the embowering trees, and I was left to my reflections.

I suppose they shaped themselves into a question which is ever uppermost in the minds of Englishmen: *Cui bono?* To what end so much time lost, such long journeys undertaken? Where to these prayers and hymns and processions? Are we not Englishmen, and have we not been taught that 'Pardons,' pains, and purgatories are 'fond things,' and 'vainly' invented? I am sure, so far as this is a consoling thought—as no doubt it is to thousands of pious persons—I would be the last to deprive them of the consolation they derive from it. I am not going to propose to transfer the Breton Pardon into England, to start a pilgrimage—say in the Black Country, or at Margate in the season. I do not think it would be appropriate, or that it would be very numerously attended by Whitechapel costermongers, for example. I am afraid it would be regarded as an anachronism and a retrogression of civilization. Such things as these are the growth of centuries, and part of the social life of a people. Our religion, like our politics, expresses itself in other ways. But, alas! I am conscious of preaching a sermon, an old one and a stale, and one that long ago was preached far better by the great

preacher of 'London Society.' Overcome by emotions akin to those to which this humble scribbler has owned himself a prey, overcome by emotions in that first of Christian temples—

'Christ's mighty shrine above His martyr's grave,'

the great prophet of Vanity Fair, utterly regardless of self-respect, had well-nigh bowed before the symbols of the faith that is enshrined around that august sepulchre—but no, it could not be—alas, he cried, for our insularity; there is the Channel between us, and we no more believe in St. Thomas of Canterbury than we do in his successor, John Bird, that his bones will work miracles, or his picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence will wink.

Yet surely there are some lessons to be derived from what I have been describing. And here a word as to the classes who attend these celebrations. They may certainly be called 'representative.' There is, it is true, a fair sprinkling of the gentry, and they certainly do honour, as far as outward demeanour goes, to the order to which they belong. But the majority belong to the purely agricultural classes, farmers and farm labourers and their wives and families; and a fine race of people they are. The men are tall, athletic, and well made, and cleaner as a race, I should say, than their kindred Celtic races. One looked in vain for that peculiarly repulsive type of *vaurien*, so common, unhappily, among the lower classes of great towns in France. Here is such a one, whom I saw at a railway station nearer the confines of the more civilized portions of France. One would wonder how such a fellow ever came to be born, what his parents were like, if he ever was

a boy—but we remember the ‘Tricotuses de la Guillotine,’ the

‘Pétroleuses,’ and the ‘gamins’ of Paris, and what was done in that great city two summers gone. Surely of such things as these, is my friend the growth. We turn from him to his less civilized brethren of the Bas-Bretagne:—Well, what are they all doing? Going on pilgrimage. ‘Now a pilgrimage,’ said an English clergyman, writing from this very spot a few years since, ‘seems an anachronism. It was exploded and shown to be vain three hundred years ago. Luther stormed at it, Erasmus sneered at it, Calvin argued against it, Voltaire held it up to merciless ridicule, the Revolution swept it utterly away, yet in this age of steamboats, railways, and electric telegraphs, the shrine of Sainte Anne has its thousands of pilgrims, and thousands of prayers are offered to her by the countrymen of Voltaire, in the language of the *Encyclopædia*. Exeter Hall would say, “Give the people the Bible in Brezonec, and the pilgrimages and pardons will disappear;” but the people have the Bible in Brezonec. The Breton bishops have translated it into the vulgar tongue and distributed it at the modest price of one shilling and eight-pence. Yet rich and poor still make pilgrimage, they still attend Pardons, they still weary the saints with entreaties to pray for them.’ Here, then, we have to deal with a

fact, a fact, too, which points to a faith in earnestness, whatever we may think of the mode of its expression in the Breton people, which at least has the characteristic of endurance. I will only add the words of a writer in the ‘Standard’ some months back, at the time of the pilgrimage to Lourdes, and I think it will express my feelings better than I am able. He says, ‘We may all regret that what we call a purer religion is not the appanage of France, but it is just possible that any religion, if sincerely held, is better than none at all.’ How popular the latter is, it will, perhaps, be more conducive to our own peace of mind, especially at this holy season of joy, not to inquire.

The Pardons of Brittany are by no means its only interesting features. Archaeologists may find among its weird Menhirs and Dolmens copious food for their antiquarian palates. And is there not to be seen, within a few paces of Landerneau, the Château of La Roche la Forêt, erstwhile that ‘Joyeuse Gard,’ whither the great Sir Lancelot du Lac brought Queen Guinever, and which, when he had given her back safe unto her lord, he ever after called the ‘Dolorous Gard?’

The quaint language, the peculiarities of race, the wild poetry of their songs and national legends, are a thousand themes for thinkers. I have endeavoured to touch on these in giving you a view of one side of the character of this truly interesting people. I have avoided fault-finding and criticism, for the aim, surely, of a critic is ever ‘how not to do it.’ His rather was the greater mind who bid us find, if might be, ‘sermons in stones and good in everything.’

PEREGRINUS.

ON THE THRESHOLD.

LED on by the lure of their tossing arms,
 By the spell of their splendid hair,
 And the bosoms half unbare,
 I followed the flight of their radiant charms,
 Through the sad and sultry air—
 Through the sad and sultry air ;
 I had tracked them on through a hundred harms,
 And found them still more fair.

I followed the steps of the Bacchant band
 Through a maze with roses red,
 With the dew on my face and head—
 The dew flung back by the careless hand
 Of the beautiful girls that fled—
 Of the beautiful girls that fled ;
 And my heated lips were lightly fann'd
 By the breath of their tender tread.

The stars came out with a trembling gleam,
 And a gentle wind awoke
 In the shades of a caverned oak,
 That started to life from its summer dream,
 That nodded its brows and spoke—
 That nodded its brows and spoke
 Of the passions drowned in the passing stream,
 And the hearts that loved and broke.

But little I recked of the ancient tale
 That the ancient babbler told ;
 For I saw the glance of gold,
 The glittering hair that sought the gale
 From the women bright and bold—
 From the women bright and bold ;
 Like a vessel urged with many a sail
 On an ocean dim and old.

Drawn on by the dance of their glowing limbs
 And the pulse of their fiery feet—
 By a vision wild and fleet ;
 Entranced by the eye that swoons and swims
 In the dew of a rapture sweet—
 In the dew of a rapture sweet ;
 Bewitched by the cries of the Bacchic hymns
 That burst in a bliss complete.

And I heard the call of the plaintive dove,
 From the depths of the myrtle sheaves,
 And the clinging ivy leaves ;
 Yet I felt but the wave of a mighty love,
 But the wave that throbs and heaves—
 But the wave that throbs and heaves ;
 That drags the soul from its flight above,
 And delights, though it still deceives.

Is it well for a man to have loved an hour
 In the light of a woman's eye,
 In the breath of her panting sigh ?
 To have lived for love, and lost its power,
 And found it all a lie —
 And found it all a lie ?
 Is it well to have won a deadly dower,
 To sin and rejoice and die ?

But still I pursued the dazzling dance
 Of the girls that laughed and leapt,
 That sang as they lightly stept,
 With the beckoning hand and the backward glance,
 Where the magic moonlight slept—
 Where the magic moonlight slept :
 I moved like a man in a glorious trance
 Through the dewy trees that wept.

But then they came to a temple vast,
 Shut in by the shadows deep,
 Where the planets glide and peep.
 Up a hundred steps they swiftly past,
 And ever with laugh and leap—
 And ever with laugh and leap ;
 While I said to my soul, ' We shall read at last
 The secret the ages keep.'

The temple rose from its marble base,
 As a wonder white and tall,
 Through its sombre cypress pall.
 Inside lay a world of light and grace,
 With revel and water's fall—
 With revel and water's fall ;
 And there was joy in the solemn place,
 But a fear crept over all.

And up the height of the hundred stairs
 I fled like a guilty soul
 That has lost the last control ;
 And yet I muttered some hasty prayers
 As I heard the thunder roll—
 As I heard the thunder roll ;
 And I drank the breath of the perfumed airs
 From the steaming urn and bowl.

But I stopped at the threshold yet a while,
 To assure my labouring will
 That my heart might feast its fill
 On the floating locks and the flashing smile,
 And the distant song-birds' trill—
 And the distant song-birds' trill,
 Till I longed to spring to the wooing guile,
 Though I stood at the threshold still.

And O the whirl of the maddening throng,
 Of the winding hands and feet,
 With their frolic bound and beat :

And the pause for the laughter low and long,
In the shade of a shy retreat—
In the shade of a shy retreat,
When the amorous blood was full and strong,
And the warm embraces sweet !

And then to recline on the starry thrones,
To sink and sob and rest
On a white and welcome breast,
While kisses mixed with the gentle tones ;
Were this not far the best—
Were this not far the best ;
And not to faint on the rugged stones,
By the endless road opprest ?

So I pondered still in my troubled heart,
As I gazed at the shining show, ;
In its restless ebb and flow ;
At the waving hands that joined to part,
At the feet that came to go—
At the feet that came to go ;
As the dancers wove their wondrous art,
And eddied to and fro.

And why should I pause on the threshold's bound
While love was fresh and free,
With faces fair to see ;
While the fountains flowed with a singing sound,
And a soft, imperious plea—
And a soft, imperious plea.
Should bliss by others be sought and found,
And never be known by me ?

' Ah ! come to our home,' said the pouting lips ;
' Ah ! come,' said the kindling eyes,
' From thy cold and cloudy skies.
Thou shalt twine thy brows with the rose's slips,
And repose where the lily lies—
And repose where the lily lies ;
Thou shalt cool thy mouth with honeyed sips,
And ease thy breast with sighs.'

And I told my soul, ' It is wise and well
To fly from the trail of tears
To the mild and jocund spheres,
Where pleasures smile and the blossoms smell,
And sorrow never sears—
And sorrow never sears ;
Where the shadows fall as the shadows fell,
Through the slow, delicious years.'

Then I raised my foot with a firmer tread
To cross the boundary line ;
And a great resolve was mine
To bury the past and the hateful dead
In the joy of songs and wine—
In the joy of songs and wine ;
When, unawares, ere my passion sped,
I breathed a prayer divine.

Yet I moved my face to the coaxing kiss
 Of a woman passing fair ;
 When, behold, from her bosom's lair,
 Slipt forth a snake with an angry hiss,
 And coiled in her golden hair—
 And coiled in her golden hair ;
 While I saw beneath me a dark abyss,
 And the bones that whitened there !

And O the woe of the dreadful change
 That fell on those features bright,
 Like the eclipse of a sudden night
 That darkened along the temple's range,
 And dimmed the jubilant sight—
 And dimmed the jubilant sight ;
 That struck with a horror stiff and strange
 Those forms of life and light !

For the women turned to threatening shapes,
 The love to hollow lust,
 To hate the looks of trust ;
 To ashes grey the purple grapes,
 And the flowers to bitter dust—
 And the flowers to bitter dust ;
 Yea, monstrous owls and hideous apes
 Arose with moth and rust.

And across the threshold figures strode
 With swords of flaming fire,
 And their feet besmirched with mire ;
 That staggered beneath the grievous load
 Of an ever-growing ire—
 Of an ever-growing ire ;
 That hugged as they cursed the piercing goad
 Of a never-quenched desire !

And the clash of arms and the cries of pain
 Rang over that awful room,
 And were mocked by the hidden tomb,
 Till I fled through the thunder, night, and rain
 From the place of death and doom—
 From the place of death and doom ;
 But I saw, as I turned, the tortured train,
 In the mingled glare and gloom !

F. W. ORDE WARD.



PARTRIDGE MANORS AND ROUGH SHOOTING.

BY 'OLD CALABAR.'

BRIGHT, beautiful, glorious June!

I have often been asked which of the four seasons I like the best; my answer has ever been the same: 'The hunting, shooting, fishing, and racing.' One season I detest (the very name of it gives me the cold shivers)—the *London one*; defend me from that; for if there is a particular time which is calculated to make 'Paterfamilias' miserable and more out of humour than another, it is that abominable period of shopping, dinners, evening parties, operas, theatres, concerts, flirtations, flower-shows, and the dusty Row, with its dangerous holes.

I hate the formality—the snobism of the 'little village.' I begin to think Napoleon I. was right when he said we were 'a nation of shopkeepers.' I do not mind a good dinner, when I can get one; but there is the rub, I never do get a good dinner; the English do not know how to dine. After twenty years' residence on the Continent, I have come to the conclusion that John Bull is miserably, hopelessly behindhand with our French neighbours on all matters pertaining to eating and drinking; but then I balance the account in this way—Mossoo is not a sportsman; and although he will tell you he is a '*chasseur intrépide*,' '*un cavalier de première force*,' he does not shine either in the hunting or shooting field.

But the French ladies? Ah, they can dress; they beat us there again into Smithereens.

I am not like a bear in the hollow of a tree, who has been sucking his paws all the winter to keep him alive; I have been en-

joying most of our country amusements, and I may say the winter has passed pleasantly.

Of late years a deaf ear has been turned to hints thrown out 'for a change of air, things wanted,' &c. Busily engaged in building, draining, planting, and so on, little time could be given by me to London festivities.

The last attack was made in a somewhat ingenious manner.

'Frederick, poor Alice wants her teeth looking at. I think she had better go up to town for three weeks or a month, and be put under the care of a good dentist.'

This was as much as to say, 'We are all to go;' but I was equal to the occasion.

'By all means, my dear, let her go. My sister is there for the season, and will only be too delighted to have her; but as for my leaving the place at present, with all I have to do, it is an utter impossibility.' This was a settler.

Somehow or other I begin to feel more lively as spring comes on. As a rule, about the middle of May I require a little spring medicine and a change of air. I find that the breezes of Epsom Downs agree famously with me, although my better half always declares I 'look vilely' on my return. Absurd nonsense! But I love my own quiet country life; its wild unfettered freedom. Away from the smoke, dust, and tumult of over-crowded cities—away from late hours and the unwholesome glare of gas, and I am happy.

A trip to Ascot and Goodwood with my family keeps matters all straight. A break now and then,

and the quiet monotony of country life is not felt.

June, bright, beautiful, glorious June, has peculiar attractions for me. I am a shooter. I have not a grouse moor, for the simple reason I cannot afford one; as my old keeper says, 'It is master's terrible long family and expenses that prevents his going into shooting as he would like.'

I am obliged to content myself with a partridge manor; and, after all, I believe I like partridge and snipe shooting better than any other.

A friend of mine once said he considered *snipe-shooting* '*the fox-hunting of shooting*', and I am disposed to agree with him.

But, to return to June, from the 5th to about the 20th of the month, most of the forward hatches come off, and are seen basking and bathing round their mother, as represented in the frontispiece.

But there are other hatches much later, for cheepers are often found in September quite unfit to shoot at.

I can only account for this, that the old birds have had their eggs destroyed in some way or other.

A partridge manor is not one quarter the expense of pheasants and covers. The latter birds not only require constant attention, night and day, but feeding forms a very serious item. Pheasants are very costly, and only within reach of the rich man.

A partridge manor, to have a good head on it, though, must be well looked after, the vermin kept down, and your keeper with a sharp eye to all poachers and suspicious characters.

With a net at night they often sweep off the birds wholesale; but there is a very easy way of baffling them. Put sticks, about eighteen inches high, fifteen, twenty, or thirty yards apart, over the ground

the partridges generally roost on; these, as the net is drawn along, lift it up, and the birds easily escape.'

It is a good plan to walk the fields of an evening with a brace of dogs, where you know they roost, and disturb them; they may probably then take to the gorse, if any, potatoes, seed clover, and other safe ground.

In May and June I wage war with the crows, magpies, jays and hawks, shooting or trapping the old hen birds. Always kill the male bird first: this is easily done by waiting patiently within shot, under cover of some tree or hedge where the nest is, which is generally built in some pretty high tree; the hen will not desert if sitting hard, which you should allow her to do, her death is then easily accomplished.

I never allow poison to be used, for I hold that a keeper who cannot destroy all vermin by means of his gun and traps is not worth his wages.

To have any quantity of game, it is better that you and your keepers are on good terms with your neighbours; they will do as much good as half a dozen watchers.

In May and June I always keep a lot of light broody hens ready to sit, for during the mowing season many partridge nests are cut out. The eggs are brought warm to me, and are instantly set under one of the hens.

The people who bring me in the eggs I invariably reward, but they are never encouraged or allowed to look for nests. Now, if these men were not paid a trifle, and a horn of ale given to them, they would not trouble themselves or lose their time. It would be very easy to put their foot on the eggs and crush them.

I am not an advocate for hand-reared birds, as there is some trouble

and expense feeding them, and they do not grow strong and vigorous nearly so quickly as wild ones.

In one year alone, some four or five seasons back, I had six hundred eggs cut out, and over five hundred birds were reared.

Chamberland's food is the best for them, as well as for pheasants.

Of course the hens should be cooped. There is one thing you must be most particular about, and that is never to place the coops near an old bank, or where there are rabbit-burrows, for these spots are not only the haunts of stoats and weasels, but there is an animal quite as dangerous, who loves a young partridge—the hedgehog. Many are of opinion that the hedgehog is harmless, but this idea I have proved to be erroneous (see 'Over Turf and Stubble,' published by Richard Bentley, 'The Hedgehog a Game-eater').

My life has been spent following up the sports of the field and observing the habits of different animals.

The better way is, when your birds are young, to have them on your lawn, or in a field close to the house.

The coops must be closed at night, to keep vermin and cats (deadly poachers) getting at them. It is a mistake to let them out too early of a morning. The drier the ground the better partridges do when young. As they get stronger, remove them with their coops to a potato or clover field, cutting a swarth through the latter to put the coops on and feed them. Place the coops twenty or thirty yards apart, or the birds, when young, will be straying into the wrong coops, and the hens will kill them, for they well know their own family.

I like a clover-field the best, because there is lots of cover, and

they escape the sharp eye of hawks and other vermin.

In taking a partridge manor, ascertain first, by going over it yourself, if there is a fair head of breeding stock on the ground.

A wise 'old saw' informs us that, 'if you want anything done well, do it yourself;' and this I certainly advise in this case, unless you have a keeper you can really trust.

Do not take a manor that has too much grass land. There ought to be plenty of cover—turnips, clover, potatoes, rape, stubble, heath, &c., to insure good sport; for, if your ground is bare, although you may have plenty of birds, it will soon be impossible to get at them, for, as you enter a field, they will be away at the other end, and not having any cover to drive them to, you may follow them for hours and never get a shot.

A manor, too, should not be all low ground, or the inclosures too small. In such a country, good, fast and free-going dogs soon become cramped in their range and potterers. It is, in an inclosed country, impossible to mark the birds; and constantly getting over stiff fences not only tires you, but it unsteadies your hand, which will lose its cunning.

A partridge country should be as open as possible; then you can see your dogs work, which, in my humble opinion, constitutes the greatest charm of shooting.

Farms are often let at eighteen-pence an acre, which is an absurd price—a shilling is quite enough; but in many counties you can get as much good ground as you like at sixpence, but not near London. I hired, some two years ago, some capital rough shooting in North Wales at less than threepence an acre, but it was too cold for my better half to reside in during the winter months. Whatever county

you may fix on, avoid the red-legs; though a very handsome bird, and much larger than ours, they are not nearly so good for the table as the grey ones, being dry and tasteless; and they will spoil any dog, as they never take wing unless hardly pressed, but will run field after field. I destroy their eggs wherever I meet them.

In Norfolk, Suffolk, and particularly Essex, there are large quantities of them; they not only ruin your dogs, but they drive the grey birds away. I would not have a manor where there were any quantity of red-legs at a gift.

Having now told you how to go to work, I will, in the garb of narrative, which, nevertheless, is true, show you how shooting, with other sport, may be had at little cost by those who love it and prefer a country life. I give it you as related to me by a very dear old friend of mine.

'Lenox and myself were boys at school, and afterwards at college, together. A fine handsome fellow he was too, and doatingly attached to all field sports; he was not a rich man, quite the contrary, 300*l.* a year at his father's death was all he had left to him, yet he managed to keep up a tolerable appearance even in London, and was engaged to one of the most beautiful girls I ever saw, and with a nice little fortune of her own.

'Lenox was very fond and very proud of her, as well he might be; everything was arranged, the day fixed, trousseau bought, and his pretty little cottage in Hampshire newly and tastefully furnished to receive its new mistress. But, lo! a week before their wedding the young lady eloped with a nobleman, and they were married before Lenox knew anything about it.

'He said little, but felt it deeply; all were sorry for him, for he was a great favourite.

'Shortly after his pretty little cottage was sold, and with his effects Lenox vanished mysteriously, no one knew whither.

'I went abroad, and was away many years, and, therefore, had no means of finding out where he had betaken himself to, or what he was doing.

'After more than twenty years' absence I returned to the old land; I had been satiated with sport of all kinds in different parts of the globe, and did not feel inclined to give the high prices asked for shootings.

'My wife was somewhat delicate, and required a mild climate, so I took "the galloper," ran down to Plymouth, and from thence to Cornwall, determined, if I could, to buy a place there. I roamed about the country looking at different estates, and at last hit on a beautiful spot, with a nice house on it, convenient to the rail, and not too far from a good country town or schools.

'One day during my peregrinations with the agent who had the selling of the property, I came on one of the most lovely little cottages I ever saw, placed on a slope, well sheltered from the winds, myrtles and fuchsias growing luxuriantly and abundantly about, with its jessamine and honeysuckle covered porch, thatched roof, well-kept grounds, gardens, and brawling stream at the end of the lawn. I thought it one of the most fairy-looking little spots I had ever seen.

'"Whose cottage is that?" I asked, "it is not on this property, is it?"

'"Oh no, sir, just off this land; it belongs to Mr. Lenox."

'"Lenox," I breathlessly asked, "Horace Lenox?"

"That's it, sir—one of the nicest gentlemen in these parts, and a rare sportsman; it is not his own property, only hired on long lease, but he has done a deal to it; three thousand acres of good mixed shooting and capital fishing, with that cottage, is not dear at fifty pounds a year, is it, sir?"

"I should think not, indeed. Mr. Lenox is one of my oldest friends. I must go and call on him," which I did.

I was told, on asking at the door, that he was out fishing, but would be home to dinner at six o'clock.

"Give him this card," I said to the respectable old servant who had answered the ring, "and tell him, I shall be here at six to dine with him. Is he married?"

"Oh dear no, sir, master is a single gentleman. I don't think he cares much about the women folk," she added, in her quaint Cornish way.

The time hung heavily on my hands that day, so impatient was I to see my dear, valued old friend, and half-past five saw me walking up the well-kept walk towards his house.

As I approached, a figure issued from the porch, surrounded by four or five beautiful setters.

A fine, handsome-looking man of three or four and forty advanced towards me, but quite grey; there was no mistaking, though, his honest, beaming, well-known face.

"Frederick, old fellow," said he, grasping me by the hand, "this is indeed kind of you; hundreds of times have I wondered what had become of you, and if you were still in the land of the living."

"And I the same, Lenox; by mere chance have I found you out. I inquired at all the old haunts when I returned to England, and

could never learn where you were."

"Then you are the gentleman, I suppose, that has been looking at the estate next to me, with a view to purchase?"

"Just so, Horace, *ecce homo.*"

"You could not do better, old fellow; I will put you in the way. I know every inch of the ground—rare shooting—but come in, and I will tell you all about it after dinner. Margaret, my servant, is in the devil's own way, for it is rarely I ever have any one to dine with me."

The inside of the cottage was just as pretty as the outside; his dining-room was a study for a sportsman: guns, rods, sporting pictures, &c., here hung all round the walls in endless profusion; it was the very essence of comfort and taste.

"Now, Horace," said I, as I threw myself into one of the comfortable arm-chairs beside the open window, and he into another, "tell me all that has happened since we last met."

"That is easily done," he returned, drawing up a small table between us, with a bottle of claret on it, that sent its aroma all over the apartment as he drew the cork.

"You know how I was served in London?" and his face assumed a hard, stern expression as he asked the question.

"Well, yes," I replied; "but you have forgotten all that, Horace?"

"I have not forgotten it. I never can forget it; it was a dreadful blow to me; but I have forgiven it years ago, and am content with my lot. I left London in disgust, wandered about, and at last found this little spot. I have the shooting of three thousand acres of land—ten acres for my two cows—I am

as happy as possible. I breed lots of those," pointing to his setters, who were lying about; "and they pay me well. I have poultry, pigs, shooting—the woodcock and snipe shooting is particularly good in the season—and fishing in abundance; as good a cob as any man need possess; deny myself nothing in reason, and never know what a dull hour is. But you will sleep here, for I have already found out where you were, and sent for your things."

'I never passed a happier evening than I did with my long-lost friend; we smoked our cigars and talked of old times and old things that had happened years ago, passed never to return again.

"So your eldest boy is sixteen," he remarked, after one of the pauses. "Well, you must buy this place, Frederick, it is as cheap as dirt, and will pay you well. I will make your lads sportsmen—but I suppose you have done that yourself. I want companions now—no female ones," he added, laughingly, "your wife excepted; but some one to fish and shoot with me—the partridge-shooting is capital."

'I was delighted with all I saw the next day; the place was lovely, and I was induced to spend a week with him. At the end of that time I was the purchaser of the property, and left to bring down my family and all my belongings.

'I have never regretted the step; though far away from the busy hum of the world, we are as happy as may be. Horace and I fish and shoot away; there is a calm quietness which I love. I, like my friend, have had some ups and downs in life, but they, in my country retreat, are gradually "fading away."

It is all very well for men who have long purses and large possessions to take expensive shootings; they can afford it and why should they not? What might I not be tempted to do if I had the chance, I cannot say, and, therefore, I will not speculate.

To my young readers who are not *au fait* at all these matters, I would urge them never to be too hasty in deciding on taking any shooting. If they are not in easy circumstances, they must go very cautiously to work; but that fair partridge and general shooting is to be had at a moderate figure I can prove.

It is not generally known, but there are many parts of Scotland where there is first-rate partridge-shooting, and arrangements can be made to have it after the grouse-shooters have done and returned to England. I know several gentlemen who have made this arrangement, and get their sport at a very moderate cost.

But gadding about to places is not my form. I prefer to remain on the spot, and then I can always see how matters are going on.

In taking a rough bit of shooting, only one keeper is necessary; one good man will do it far better than half a dozen bad ones. It is, I admit, a difficult thing to get such a man, but they are to be had.

I have written this paper solely for the guidance of those whose means are limited; the rich can do as they like; money is often no object to them; but this I have known to be a fact, that the man who has only spent two or three hundreds, and often very much less, on his shooting has had far better sport than many of those who have spent thousands.

'NO INTENTIONS.'

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT, AUTHOR OF 'LOVE'S CONFLICT,' 'VERONIQUE,' ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

'WHAT is the reason that that woman is permitted to behave towards us as she does?'

Irene closes the dining-room with a loud slam as she speaks, and, as she turns to confront him again, Oliver Ralston sees that the pallor that overspread her features at the housekeeper's insulting speech has given way to a rosy flush of anger.

'Indeed I cannot tell you, Mrs. Mordaunt: I have asked myself the same question for years past, but never been able to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. But you are trembling: pray sit down—this scene has overcome you.'

'Overcome me! How could it do else but overcome me? I have not been used to see servants assume the place of mistresses; and I feel, since I have come to Fen Court, as though the world were turned upside down. Mr. Ralston, do you know that that woman occupies one of the best rooms in the house?'

'I know it well! I was sent back to school once, in the midst of my holidays, for having had the childish curiosity to walk round it.'

'That she lies in bed till noon,' continues Irene, 'and has her breakfast carried up to her; that she does nothing here to earn her living, but speaks of the house and servants as though they were her own property——'

'I can well believe it.'

'And that she has actually refused to receive any orders from me.'

'Not really!' exclaims Oliver Ralston, earnestly.

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'Really and truly!'

'And what did my uncle say to it?'

'That I had better give my orders to the cook instead!'

There is silence between them for a few minutes, till Irene goes on, passionately:

'I could not bear it—I would not bear it—if it were not for Philip. But he is the very best and kindest man in the world, and I am sure he would prevent it if he could. Sometimes, Mr. Ralston, I have even fancied that he is more afraid of Quekett than any of us.'

'It is most extraordinary,' muses Oliver, 'and unaccountable. That there is a mystery attached to it I have always believed, for the most quixotic devotion to a father's memory could hardly justify a man in putting up with insult from his inferiors. Why, even as a child, I used to remark the difference in my uncle's behaviour towards me when Quekett was away. His manner would become quite affectionate.'

'Doesn't she like you, then?'

'She hates me, I believe.'

'But why?'

'I have not the least idea, unless it is that boys are not easily cowed into a deferential manner, and Mrs. Quekett has always stood greatly on her dignity. Do you not see how frightened Aunt Isabella is of her?'

'Indeed I do. I waylaid her, only yesterday, going up to the old woman's room with the newspapers, that had just arrived by the morning's post. I took

them all back again. "Not to-day's, if you please, Isabella," I said. "I should think yesterday's news was quite fresh enough for the servants' hall." "Oh! but Mrs. Quekett has always been accustomed," she began—you know her funny way—but I had mine in the end. And Philip said I was right. He always does say so whenever I appeal to him. But why can't he get rid of her?"

"Why, indeed! Perhaps there is some clause attached to the conditions on which he holds the property, of which we know nothing. I suppose it will all come to light some day. Discussion is futile."

"And I am not sure that it is right," replies Irene, blushing. "Perhaps I should not have spoken so freely as I have, but I was much annoyed. Whatever Colonel Mordaunt's reasons may be for keeping Mrs. Quekett, I am sure of one thing—that they are good and just, for he is of too upright and honourable a character to lend his hand to anything that is wrong."

"My uncle is a happy man to have so staunch a defender in his absence," says Oliver, admiringly.

"If his wife does not defend him, who shall?" she answers; "but all this time I am forgetting that you have had no refreshment, Mr. Ralston. What a careless hostess you must think me! Now, confess that you have had no dinner."

"Well, none that deserves that name, certainly."

"I thought so; but what can you expect, if you go and stay at a wretched hovel like the "Dog and Fox?" Let us see what the Court larder can produce," ringing the bell. "At all events, Mrs. Quekett shall not baulk us of our supper."

She orders the table to be spread, and in a very short time a sub-

stantial repast is placed before them, to which they sit down together, banishing the subject of Mrs. Quekett by mutual consent, until the Colonel shall return again, and chatting on such topics as are more consistent with their youth and relative positions.

At eleven o'clock the carriage wheels are heard grating on the gravelled drive, and Irene starts to her feet joyfully.

"Here he is," she cries. "Now we will have this matter set right for us."

Oliver also rises, but does not appear so confident: on the contrary, he remains in the background until the first salutations between Mrs. Mordaunt and the returning party are over. Then his uncle catches sight of him.

"Holloa! who have we here? Why, Oliver"—with the slightest shade of annoyance passing over his face—"I had no idea you intended coming down so soon. Why didn't you say so in your letter? When did you arrive?"

But his wife gives him no time to have his questions answered.

"Now, are you not pleased?" she exclaims. "Have I not done right? I met this gentleman in the shrubbery, Philip, smoking—all by himself; and, when I found he was your nephew, and was actually staying at that dirty little "Dog and Fox"—fancy sleeping in that hole—I gave him an invitation to Fen Court on the spot, and made him come back with me. Now, wasn't I right?—say so!"—with her face in dangerous proximity to the Colonel's.

"Of course you were right, my darling—you always are," he replies, kissing her; "and I am very glad to see Oliver here. Have you—have you seen old Quekett?" he continues, in rather a dubious tone, turning to his nephew.

But Irene again interfares.

'Seen her, Philip—I should think we *had* seen her, and heard her into the bargain. She has been so *horribly* rude to us.'

Colonel Mordaunt's face flushes.

'Rude! I hope not! Perhaps you misinterpreted what she said, Irene. You are rather apt to take offence in that quarter, you know, young lady.'

'I could not possibly mistake her meaning; she spoke too plainly for that. Besides, Mr. Ralston was with me, and heard what she said. She as good as told him he was not a gentleman!'

Colonel Mordaunt grows scarlet.

'Oh! come! come! don't let us think or talk any more about an old woman's crotchety speeches.'

'But, Philip, we *must* talk, because the worst is to come. I told her to have the Green Room prepared for Mr. Ralston, and she flatly refused to do so without your orders.'

'Well, give her my orders, then!'

'Indeed, I shall do no such thing!' with a slight pout. 'If mine are not to be obeyed, you must deliver your own. Meanwhile no room is ready for your nephew, and — *our guest*, remember!'

'Well, my darling, ring the bell, then, and tell them to get it ready,' he answers, testily.

The bell resounds through the house.

'Order Quekett'—Irene issues the command with a sharpness very foreign to her—'to have the Green Room prepared *at once* for Mr. Ralston. Remember the *Green Room!*'

As soon as the servant has disappeared, Colonel Mordaunt seems most anxious to drop the subject.

'Well, Oliver, and so you think of practising in the country, eh? That's not the road to fame, remember.'

'I am afraid the road I am treading now, sir, will not lead me there either. A town life is too expensive and too full of temptation for such a weak fool as I am. I cannot resist it, therefore I must put it out of my way.'

'That is true strength,' says Irene, with kindling eyes. She is standing now against her husband, and has drawn one of his arms round her waist.

'But why seek work near Priestley—the worst possible place you could come to?'

'Only because I heard of it here. A Dr. Robertson, of Fenton, advertised for an assistant, and I thought it might be an opening. I saw him this morning.'

'And have you decided anything?'

'Certainly not. Robertson and I like the looks of each other, and I think we should pull together. But I should not dream of settling anything until I had consulted you.'

'Right! To-morrow I may be able to advise you: to-night I am too sleepy. Come, Irene, are you ready for bed?'

'Quite ready,' and the party separates. On her way upstairs, Irene peeps into the Green Room, half expecting to find it dark and deserted. But no; candles are burning on the toilet-table, towels and soap and other necessaries are in their proper places, and a couple of rosy housemaids are beating up the pillows and making the bed. All is right so far; and Irene enters her own room, almost ready to believe that Mrs. Quekett must have repented of her hasty behaviour.

Here she finds her husband waiting for her.

'Irene,' he commences, gravely, 'don't try and persuade young Ralston to remain here over to-night.'

'Of course I will not, if it is against your wish, Philip. But I thought, in asking him, that I was only doing just what you would have done yourself.'

'Oh, yes! it doesn't matter—I am glad enough to see the boy—only he might have timed his visit more conveniently. We shall be full next week, you know.'

She does not know any such thing, nor does she heed it. Another mystery is troubling her now.

'Philip! why have you never told me about this nephew of yours?'

'I have told you, haven't I? Don't you remember my mentioning him one day at Weymouth?'

'I do; but it was only *en passant*. Yet he tells me he is your ward.'

'Well, a kind of ward. I wish he were not'—with a sigh.

'Does he give you so much trouble?'

'A great deal, and has always done so. He leads much too fast a life, and his health has given way under it, and his morals. He drinks too much and smokes too much—he has even gambled. It is for this reason, chiefly, that I do not wish him to become intimate with you. I value my precious girl too much to expose her purity to contamination.'

She slips her hand into his.

'Too hard a word, Philip. How could Mr. Ralston's company injure me? He is not likely to infect me with the vices you mention. But, if you alienate him from all respectable society, what incentive will he ever have to relinquish them? And he is an orphan, too! poor fellow!'

'You like him, Irene?'

'Yes; I like his face; it is open and candid. I like his manner, too, which is so entirely free from self-conceit. I feel that

I should like to be a friend to him. Why should I not try?'

'You shall try, my darling—at least, when Quekett is gone to town. But, to tell you the truth, Irene, Oliver and she are sworn enemies, and there is no peace in the house whilst they are together.'

'Why do you allow it, Philip?' says Irene, stoutly. 'Why don't you tell that woman she must either respect your guests or go?'

'She doesn't look on Oliver as a guest,' he replies, evasively. 'She has known him from a baby.'

'She has not known me from a baby,' says his wife, bitterly; 'and yet she speaks to me as no menial has ever presumed to speak before. Oh, Philip! if it were not for you, I couldn't stand it!'

'Hush! hush! my darling, it shall not occur again, I promise you. I shall speak to Quekett, and tell her I will not have you annoyed in this manner. You saw that I upheld your authority this evening.'

'Yes, I did. Thank you for it, and I hope it will be a lesson to the old wretch, for I detest her!'

'Strong words for a lady!' laughs Colonel Mordaunt, simply because he does not echo the sentiment.

He takes up his candlestick, and moves a little way towards the door. Then he returns suddenly, bends over his wife, and kisses her.

'Thank you,' he says, softly, 'for wishing to befriend poor Oliver, my dear!'

At these words, what Mr. Ralston told her concerning his uncle's affection being more demonstrative at one time than another, rushes into her mind, and she says, abruptly:

'Did you love his mother very much, Philip?'

'His mother!' Colonel Mordaunt appears quite upset by the remark.

'Yes; your sister: you never had a brother, had you?'

'No! I never had a brother,' he answers, vaguely.

'Then Oliver is your sister's child, I suppose. Which sister? Was she older than Isabella?'

'No! she was two years younger.' Colonel Mordaunt has recovered himself by this time, and speaks quite calmly. 'I had three sisters, Anne, Isabella, and Mary. Poor Mary made a runaway match and her father never spoke to her afterwards.'

'Well!'

'When she was dying she wrote to me (she had always been my favourite sister, poor girl!), and asked me to go and see her. Of course I went (she had been a widow for more than a year then, and was living at Cannes), and stayed by her till the last. Then I returned home, and—and—brought Oliver with me.'

'Her only child, of course.'

'The only child—yes. My father would have nothing to say to the boy; he was a little chap of about two years old at the time, and so I kept him. What else could I do?'

'And have brought him up and educated him, and everything since. Oh, Philip, how good of you—how very kind and good! How I do love and admire you for it!' And she seizes her husband's head between her hands and gives it a good squeeze. On being released, Colonel Mordaunt appears very red and confused.

'Don't, my darling, pray don't: I am not worthy of your pure affection; I wish I were. I have only done what common justice demanded of me.'

'And you will let me help you to finish the task,' says Irene. 'I dare say all these things—the knowledge of his orphanhood and that his grandfather wouldn't ac-

knowledge him—have weighed on his mind, poor boy, and driven him to the excesses of which you complain. Let us be his friends, Philip; good, firm, honest friends; ready to praise him when he is right, but not afraid to blame him when he is wrong—and you will see him a steady character yet. I am sure of it—there is something in the very expression of his face that tells me so.'

Her husband catches her enthusiasm; thanks her again for the interest she displays on behalf of his nephew; and leaves her just in the mood to confront Mrs. Quekett and defeat her with her own weapons. And on the landing, outside the bedroom door, where she had probably been airing her ear at the keyhole, he intercepts her.

'Quekett!' he says, loftily, as she starts at his forthcoming, 'I wish to say two words to you in my dressing-room. Be so good as to follow me.'

He stalks to the hall of judgment majestically with his candlestick in his hand, and she follows in his train, but she will not stoop so low as to close the dressing-room door upon their entrance; and so the Colonel has to return and do it himself, which rather detracts from his assumption of dignity.

'Well, sir!' she commences from the chair in which she has, as usual, ensconced herself; 'and what may your two words be? I have rather more than two to say to you myself; and as it's usual for ladies to come first, perhaps I'd better be the one to begin.'

'You can do as you like,' replies Colonel Mordaunt, whose courage is all oozing out of his fingers' ends at being shut up alone with the old beldame.

'My words won't take long to say, though they may be more than

yours. It just comes to this, Colonel: you promised me Oliver shouldn't stay in this house again, and you've broke your promise, that's all.'

'I promised you that his staying here should never inconvenience you, and you have got to prove that it will do so. Besides, it is almost entirely your own fault that it has occurred. If you had restrained your feelings a little this evening, as any prudent person would have done, you would not have excited Mrs. Mordaunt to try her influence against yours. You are carrying the game too far, Quekett. You have spoken rudely to my wife, and that is a thing that I cannot countenance in you or any one.'

'Oh, yes; of course, *my wife*. Everything's *my wife* now: and let bygones be bygones, and all the past forgotten.'

'I think bygones should be bygones, Quekett, when we can do no good by raking them up again.'

'Not for our own ill-convenience, Colonel, certainly. But to such as me, who have held by one family for a space of thirty years, and suffered with it as the Lord alone knows how, to see a place turned topsy-turvy and the servants all helter-skelter to please the freaks of a young girl, no one can say but it's trying. Why there's not a chair or a table in that drawing-room that stands in the same place as it used to do; and as for the dinners, since she's been at what you call the head of your establishment, there's not been a dinner placed upon the table that I'd ask a workhouse pauper to sit down and eat with me!'

'Well, well,' says Colonel Mordaunt, impatiently, 'these are my grievances surely, and not yours. If you have no worse complaint to bring against Mrs. Mordaunt

than this, I am satisfied. But what has it to do with your refusing to take her orders?'

'Her orders, indeed!' says the housekeeper, with a sniff.

'To follow her wishes, then, if you like the term better, with respect to so simple a thing as having one room or another prepared for her guests.'

'The Green Room for Oliver,' she interrupts, sarcastically; 'I never heard of such a thing!'

'You, at all events,' he answers, sternly, 'should be the last to raise an objection to it.'

'But I do raise it, Colonel, and I shall. I say it's absurd to treat that lad as though he was a nobleman (why, you haven't a better room to put the Prince of Wales in, if he came to visit you); and then to think of that——'

'Be careful what you say, Quekett. Don't make me too angry. I shall stand up for Oliver Ralston——'

'Oliver Fiddlesticks!'

'Whatever the rest of the family may do; and you, who talk so much of clinging to us and being faithful to our interests, should uphold, instead of fighting against me in this matter. I confess that I cannot understand it. You loved his mother, or I conclude you did——'

'Loved his mother!' echoes the woman, shrilly, as she rises from her chair; 'it is because I loved his mother, Colonel, that I hate the sight of him; it is because I remember her innocent girlhood, and her blighted womanhood, and her broken-hearted death, that to hear him speak and see him smile, in his bold way, makes me wish she had died before she had left behind her such a mockery of herself. I can't think what she was after not to do it, for she hadn't much to live for at the last, as you know well.'

'Poor Mary!' sighs the Colonel.

'Ah! poor Mary; that's the way the world always speaks of the lucky creatures that have escaped from it. I don't call her *poor Mary*, and turn up the whites of my eyes after your fashion; but I can't live in the same house with her son, and so I've told you before. Either Oliver goes, or I go. You can take your choice.'

'But you are talking at random, Quekett. You have got a crotchet in your head about Oliver, just as you have a crotchet in your head about receiving Mrs. Mordaunt's orders, and one is as absurd as the other. Just try to look at these things in a reasonable light, and all would go smoothly.'

But Mrs. Quekett is not to be smoothed down so easily.

'You can do as you please, Colonel, but my words stand. You have chosen to keep Master Oliver here.'

'I could not have done otherwise without exciting suspicion; would you have me blab the story to all the world?' he says, angrily.

'Oh! if you go on in this way, Colonel, I shall blab it myself, and save you the trouble. As if it wasn't enough to have the Court pulled to pieces before my eyes, and to be spoken to as if I was the scum of the earth, without being crossed in this fashion. You told me just now, Colonel, not to make you *too angry*—don't you do the same by me, or I may prove a tougher customer than I've done yet. Now, do you mean to let Oliver stay on here, or no?'

'I shall let him remain as long as it seems proper to myself,' replies her master, whose temper is now fairly roused.

The housekeeper can hardly believe her ears.

'You—will—let—him—remain!' she gasps. 'And why

don't you add, "according to Mrs. Mordaunt's wishes?"'

'I do add it, Quekett—"according to Mrs. Mordaunt's wishes." Mrs. Mordaunt is mistress here, and the length of her guests' visits will be determined by her desire. And whilst she is mistress here, remember that I will have her treated by you as a mistress, and not as an equal.'

Quekett stares at him for a moment in silent surprise; and then the angry blood pumps up into her face, filling her triple chins until they look like the wattles of an infuriated turkey, and making her voice shake with the excitement that ensues.

'Very well, Colonel. I understand you. You have said quite enough,' she replies, quiveringly.

'It is as well you should understand me, Quekett, and I ought to have said all this long before. You are angry now, but when you have had time to think over it, you will see that I am right.'

'Very well, Colonel—that is quite sufficient—you will have no more trouble on my account, I can assure you;' and with that Mrs. Quekett sweeps out of the dressing-room.

Colonel Mordaunt doesn't feel quite comfortable after her departure; it has been too abrupt to leave a comfortable impression behind it: but he consoles himself with the reflection that he has done what is right (not always a reflection to bring happiness with it, by the way, and often accompanied by much the same cold comfort presented by gruel, or any other nastiness that we swallow in order to do us good); and seeking Irene's presence again, sleeps the sleep of the just, trusting to the morning's light to dispel much of his foreboding.

The morning's light dispels it after this wise.

Between six and seven Irene is wakened by a strange sound at her bedside, something between the moaning of the wind and a cat's mew; and jumps up to find her sister-in-law standing there, looking as melancholy as a mute at a funeral, and sniffing into a pocket-handkerchief.

'Good gracious, Isabella! what is the matter? Is Philip—'

But no; Philip is occupying his own place of honour, and has not yet opened his eyes upon this wicked world.

'What is the matter? Are you ill?'

'Oh, no, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt; but Mrs. Quekett—I shouldn't have ventured in here, you may be quite sure—and here Isabella's virgin eyes are modestly veiled—' except that Mrs. Quekett is—oh! what will Philip say?'

'Is she dead?' demands Irene, with a lively interest not quite in accordance with the solemn inquiry.

'Dead! My dear Mrs. Mordaunt, no!'

'What is the row?' says her brother, now awake for the first time.

'Oh, Philip, Mrs. Quekett is gone.'

'Gone! where to?'

'I don't know; but I think to London—to Lady Baldwin's—I tried to stop her, but I couldn't; she would go.'

'Jubilate!' cries Irene, clapping her hands. 'I am so glad. Is she really gone? It's too good to be true.'

'Oh! but, my dear Mrs. Mordaunt, she was so angry, and so unkind, she wouldn't even kiss me,' says Isabella, relapsing into a fresh series of sniffs.

'Faugh!' replies Irene. 'What a misfortune! But, Philip, had you any idea of this?'

'None!'

'Is it because of what occurred last night?'

'I am afraid so.'

'Why afraid? We shall do much better without her. How did she go, Isabella?'

'In the carriage. I knew nothing about it till I heard the carriage drive up to the door. There is a nine o'clock train to London—I suppose she means to catch that!'

'In the carriage,' repeats Irene; 'Philip, did you ever hear of such impertinence?'

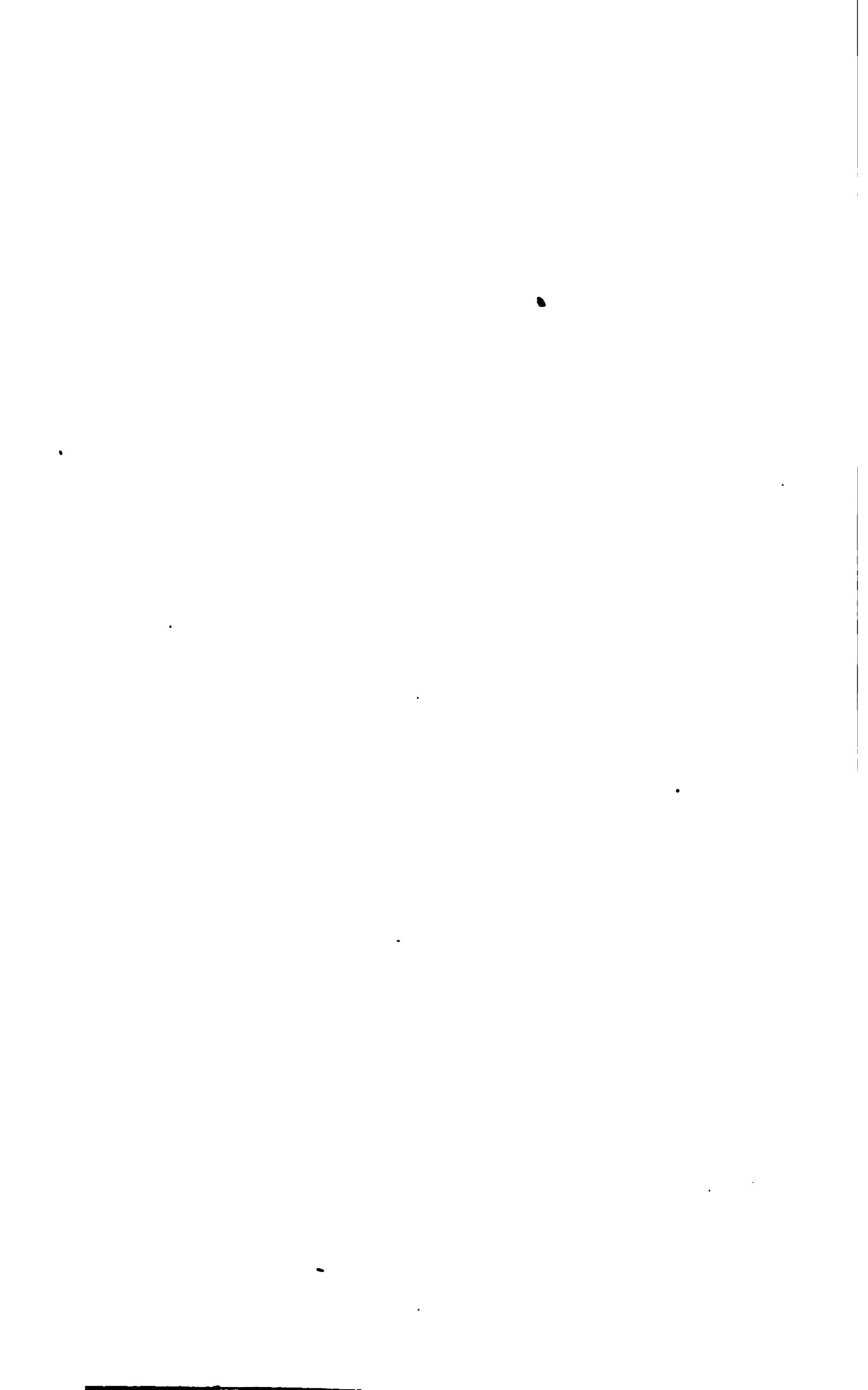
'Well, never mind, my darling; never mind it now,' he replies, soothingly. 'You see she always has been used to have the carriage to drive to the station in, on these occasions: it is not as though she were an ordinary servant, but it won't occur again—or, at all events, for some time,' he adds, as a proviso to himself. 'Did Quekett mention how long she is likely to be absent, Isabella?'

'No! she told me nothing—she would hardly speak to me—she was very, very crotchety,' replies his sister.

'How I hope she may stay away for ever!' says Irene. 'Come, Isabella, you must let me get up. It will be quite a new sensation to go down to breakfast and feel there is no chance of meeting that bird of evil omen on the stairs.'

So Miss Mordaunt leaves her brother and sister-in-law to their respective toilets, and retires, quite overcome by Irene's boldness, and almost shaken in her faith respecting the power held by Mrs. Quekett over the inhabitants of Fen Court.

As, some minutes after, the Colonel is quietly enjoying his matutinal bath, he is almost startled out of his seven senses by a violent rapping against the partition which divides his dressing-room from his wife's bedroom.



'My dear girl, what is the matter?' he exclaims, as he feels his inability to rush to the rescue.

'Philip! Philip!' with a dozen more raps from the back of her hair-brush. 'Look here, Philip—may Oliver stay with us now?'

'Yes! yes!' he shouts, in answer, 'as long as ever you like! Thank heaven, it's nothing worse,' he murmurs to himself, as he sinks back into his bath. 'I really thought the old witch had repented of her purpose, and was down on us again!'

As a whole, the village of Priestley is not picturesque in appearance, but it has wonderfully romantic-looking bits scattered about it here and there, as what country village has not? Tumble-down cottages, belonging to landlords more 'near' than thrifty, or rented by tenants whose weekly wages go to swell the income of the 'Dog and Fox,' with untidy gardens attached to them, where the narrow paths have been almost washed away by the spring showers, until they form mere gutters for the summer rain, into which the heavy blossoms of the neglected rose-trees lie, sodden and polluted from the touch of earth. Or old-fashioned cottages, built half a century before, when bricks and mortar were not so scarce as now, and held together in a firmer union, and roofs were thatched instead of slated. Cottages with darker rooms, perhaps, than the more modern ones possess, because the casements are latticed with small diamond-shaped panes, of which the glass is green and dingy, but which can boast of wide fire-places and a chimney-corner (that inestimable comfort to the aged poor, who feel the winter's draughts as keenly as

their richer brethren, and have been known to suffer from rheumatics), and cupboards to stow away provisions in, such as are never thought necessary to build in newer tenements. Such cottages as these have usually a garden as old-fashioned as themselves, surrounded by a low stone wall—not a stiff, straight wall, but a deliciously-irregular erection, with a large block left every here and there, to serve as a stepping-stone for such as prefer that mode of ingress to passing through the wicket, and of which fact stone-crop and creeping-jenny have seized base advantage, and taking root, increased in such profusion that it would be useless now to give them notice of eviction. Over the wall a regiment of various-tinted hollyhocks rear their stately heads, interspersed here and there with a bright sunflower; whilst at their feet we find clove-pinks and thyme and southernwood and camomile flowers, and all the old-world darlings which look so sweet, and, in many cases, smell so nasty, but without which an old-world garden would not be complete.

All this is very nice, but it is not so wild and romantic as the other; indeed, as a rule, we may generally conclude that the most picturesque places to look at are the least comfortable to live in. Perhaps the cottage of all others in Priestley that an artist would select as a subject for his pencil would be that of Mrs. Cray, the laundress, and it is certainly as uncomfortable a home as the village possesses. It is not situated in the principal thoroughfare—the 'street,' as Priestly proudly calls it, on account, perhaps, of its owning the celebrated 'Dog and Fox'—but at the extremity of a long lane which divides the little settlement into a cross. It is, indeed,

the very last house before we pass into the open country, and chosen, doubtless, for its contiguity to the green fields which form the washerwoman's drying-grounds. It is a long, low, shambling building, more like a barn than a cottage, with windows irregularly placed, some in the thatched roof and others on a level with one's knees. It has a wide space in front, which once was garden, but is now only a tract of beaten-down earth, like a children's playground, as indeed it is. In the centre stands an old-fashioned well, large and deep, encircled by a high brink of stonework, over which ivy grows with such luxuriance, that it endeavours to climb, and would climb and suffocate, the very windlass, were Mrs. Cray's boys and girls not constantly employed in tearing it ruthlessly away. At the side of the well is the pig-sty, but the pigs share the playground with the children, rout away amongst the ivy, snuff about the open door, try to drink out of Mrs. Cray's washing-tubs, and make themselves generally at home. On a line stretching from the cottage to the gate above the heads of this strange company flutter a variety of white and coloured garments, like the flags on a holiday-dressed frigate; whilst the projecting wooden porch—a very bower of greenery—contains several evidences of the trade which is being driven within.

* * * *

'The old home! How little she has thought of it of late! Yet she can see it in her mind's eye, as she stands pondering his words. It was not a particularly happy home to her—the homes of the poor seldom are. She had known hunger and thirst and cold, and, occasionally, the sound of harsh words within its limits, yet the memory of the dull life she led

there seems very peaceful now, compared to the excited and stormy scenes through which she has passed since leaving it.'

* * * *

Yes! it was of this old home that Myra had been thinking three years ago, when Joel Cray stood beside her in the fields of Fretterley, and urged her to return with him. It was to this old home she flew for refuge from the bitter knowledge of her lover's want of love for her, and it is in this old home that we now meet with her again.

It is at the close of a long, hot September day, and she is sitting by the open window—not attired as we saw her last, in a robe of costly material, with her hair dressed in the prevailing fashion, and gold ornaments gleaming in her ears and on her breast. Myra is arrayed in cotton now: the shawl, which is still pinned about her shoulders, is of black merino, and the hat, which she has just cast upon the table, is of black straw, and almost without trimming. Yet there is a greater change in the woman than could be produced by any quality of dress—a change so vivid and startling, to such as have not seen her during this interval of three years, as to draw off the consideration from everything except herself.

Her face has fallen away to half its former size, so that the most prominent features in it are her cheek-bones, above which her large dark eyes gleam feverishly and hollow. Her hair, which used to be so luxuriant, now poor and thin, is pushed plainly away behind her ears; whilst her lips are colourless, and the bloodless appearance of her complexion is only relieved by two patches of crimson beneath her eyes, which make her look as though she had been

rouged. Her shape, too, once so round and buxom, has lost all its comeliness; her print gown hangs in folds about her waist and bosom, and she has acquired a stoop which she never had before. Eight-and-twenty—only eight-and-twenty on her birth-day passed, and brought to this! But, as she gazes vacantly at the patch of ground in front of her aunt's cottage, she is not thinking of her health—people who are dangerously ill seldom do: yet her thoughts are bitter. The children are playing there—five children between the ages of eight and fourteen, belonging to Mrs. Cray, and a little nurse-child of which she has the charge. The latter—an infant who has not long learned to walk alone—escapes from his guardian, who is the youngest of the Crays, and attempts to climb the ivy-covered brink of the well: more, he manages to hoist his sturdy limbs up to the top, and to crawl towards the uncovered pit. His guardian attempts to gain hold of one of his mottled legs; he kicks resistance; she screams, and the scream arouses Myra from her dream. She has just been thinking how little life is worth to any one: she sees life in danger of being lost, and flies to preserve it. As she reaches the well, and seizes hold of the rebellious infant, her face is crimson with excitement.

'Tommy would do it!' explains Jenny, beginning to whimper with the fright.

The infant doesn't whimper, but still kicks vigorously against the sides of his preserver.

Myra throws down the wooden lid, which ought at all times to keep the well covered; presses Tommy passionately against her breast; then putting him down, with a good cuff on the side of his head, to teach him better for

the future, walks back into the cottage, panting.

'Why did I do it?' she thinks, as she leans her exhausted frame upon the table. 'What's the good of life to him, or me, or any one? We had much better be all dead together!'

'Hollo, Myra!' exclaims the voice of her cousin Joel, 'what, you're back again, are you? Well! I'm right glad to see you, lass, though I can't say as you look any the better for your going.'

He has come in from his daily labour, through the back kitchen, and now stands before her, with his rough, kind hands placed upon her shoulders.

'Let me look in your face, my dear, and read what it says! No news. I thought as much. Didn't I tell you so before ever you went?'

'And if an angel had told me so,' she says, passionately, 'do you think I should have listened to what he said? What's health, or wealth, or peace, or anything to me, compared to the chance of finding him again, and seeing myself righted? And yet you blame me because I can't make up my mind to part with it—the only thing the world has left me.'

'I blame you, my dear? God forbid! Only you can't expect me to see you wasting all your life running after a shadder, without warning you of the consequences. You'll wear yourself out, Myra.'

'There's a deal left to wear out,' she answers.

'Well, you're not so strong as you ought to be, and you know it; all the more reason you should hearken to what your friends tell you. This makes the sixth time you've been on the tramp after that 'Amilton.'

'Don't speak his name!' she says, quickly; 'I can't bear it.'

'Why don't you forget it, then?' he answers, almost savagely, as he deposits his tools in a corner of the room.

'Oh, Joel!' she wails, rocking herself backwards and forwards, 'I can't forget it—I wish I could. It seems written in letters of fire wherever I turn. There have I been toiling away for the last three months (I took the accounts at a large West-end shop this time), and walking myself off my legs between whiles, and yet I can't hear anything. I believe I've been to the house of every Hamilton in London, but it only ended in disappointment. I've spent all my money, and had to sell my clothes off my back to get home again into the bargain—and here I am, just as I went!' And Myra throws her head down on her outstretched arms, and falls to sobbing.

The sobs melt Joel's honest heart.

'My poor lamb!' he says, tenderly, 'you'd better give it up once and for all—it bean't of no manner of use. And suppose you found him, now!—just suppose, is he the man to right you?'

'Oh! I don't know—I don't know,' she says, amidst her tears.

'Yes, you do know; only you haven't the courage to speak out. He was sick of you three years ago; he told you as much: is he likely to be sweet on you now?'

But to this question there comes no answer but her sobs.

'I was sweet on you long before that, Myra,' continues her cousin, presently, in a low voice; 'but I ain't changed towards you. Why won't you let me mend this business. There ain't much difference between one man and another, but there's a deal to a woman in an honest name; and that's what I'll give you to-morrow, my dear, if you'll only make up your mind to it.'

'Don't, Joel! pray don't!'

'Are you never going to have another answer for me save that? One would think I wanted to do you a harm by marrying you. Tain't every one as would do it, Myra; but I knows all, and yet I says again, I'll make an honest woman of you to-morrow, if you'll choose to be my wife.'

'I can't—indeed I can't!'

'That ain't true! You could do it well enough, if you chose,' replies Joel, moving a little away from her.

'Lor, Myra! are you back again?' interrupts the coarse voice of Mrs. Cray, as she appears at the kitchen door, with her sleeves tucked up to her elbows, and wiping her steaming arms and hands upon her canvas apron; 'when did you reach?'

'About an hour ago,' says the girl, wearily.

'And no wiser than you went, I reckon?'

'No wiser than I went!'

'In course not: you're a fool for going. Trapesing about the country in that fashion after a wild-goose chase, when you ought to stop at home and look after the children!'

'I shall stop, now.'

'I'm glad to hear it, I'm sure. I've been worked to death, between the brats and the linen, since you went. And there's been fine changes up at the Court, too. The Colonel's brought home his lady; and a nice-looking creetur she is, so I hear (Joel's seen her—he can tell you); and old Mother Quckett's gone off in a huff. So much the better; I don't wish her good luck, for one; and if I see a chance of getting back the Court washing, why, I shall do it, particular if the Colonel's lady is what Joel seems to think her. Why, Joel, lad, what's up with you?—you look as if you'd had a crack on the head.'

'You'd better ask Myra,' replies Joel, sullenly.

'Why, you're never at loggerheads again, and she not home an hour! Here, Polly, lass, bring Tommy over to me, and go and see about setting out tea in the back kitchen. The kettle ain't filled yet. And you sit quiet there,' she continues, to the unfortunate Tommy, as she bumps him handsomely down on the stone floor to enforce her command, and leaves him 'there whimpering. At the sound of the child's voice, Myra raises her eyes quickly, and glances at him; then turns away, with a heavy sigh, and resumes her former position.

'What's up between you?' demands Mrs. Cray of her niece, when she has time to revert to the subject in hand. 'I suppose Joel don't like your ways of going on, and so you're huffed at it.'

'It isn't that,' replied Myra. 'Joel wants me to do what's impossible, and he's angry because I tell him so.'

'I wants her to be my wife, mother—that's the long and short of it. I want her to give up ruanning back'ards and forrards after a will-o'-the-wisp (for if she found that fine gentleman as her mind is bent upon to-morrer, he'd no more marry her than he would you), and bide here at Priestley, and bring up an honest man's children. She knows as I've hankered after her for years, and that I'd make her a good husband, and never throw nothing of what's gone in her teeth. But she puts me off with saying it's impossible. What do you think of that?'

'I think she must be out of her mind not to jump at it. Why, here comes as good a fellow as ever worked for his bread, and offers to bemean himself by looking over all your tricks and making an honest woman of you, and you

won't have him. You must be mad!'

'Perhaps I am, aunt; but I can't help it.'

'Don't talk such rubbish—(sit down when I tell you, will yer? —or I'll give yer something to remember me by!)' This *parenthese* to the little scapegoat Tommy, who has dared to rise. Mrs. Cray does not only promise—she performs; and the child does not whimper this time—he roars.

Myra springs up hastily and snatches him from her aunt's hands.

'How can you be so cruel? You treat him like a dog!'

'Well, he ain't of much more value, nor half so much use. He cumbers up the place terrible, and is a deal of trouble with his violent ways. I've said more than once lately that he's more bother than he's worth.'

'Any ways, you're paid for him,' retorts the other.

'Do you think I'd keep him without?'

'Well, you might give a little feeling for the money, then. You'll split the child's head open some day.'

'And a good job, too, if I did. He ain't likely to be missed.'

The younger woman's breast heaves, but she does not answer.

Joel tries to make peace between them.

'Come! don't you think no more about it, Myra. His 'ed ain't split this time, and mother says more than she means.'

'I don't know that, Joel,' says Mrs. Cray. 'If she scorns you, nothing can't be too hard for her.'

'Nothing has ever been too hard for me—in your opinion,' replies Myra. 'I wish I was gone, and out of it all—that I do! Oh, my God!'—and with that commences weeping afresh. But her weakness

is soon interrupted by her aunt's hurried remonstrance.

'Come, now! shake yourself up, girl! There's quality coming up the path. Here, Joel! who can it be?'

'Blest if it ain't the Colonel's lady!'

And before they have time to do more than realise the fact, Irene's tap has sounded on the half-opened door, and her voice is asking for admission. Joel, very red in the face, stands bolt upright against the chimney-place. Myra hastily passes her hand across her eyes, and turns her head another way; whilst Mrs. Cray advances to receive the visitor with her forgiving nurse-child hiding his head in her skirts.

'Are you Mrs. Cray?' demands Irene.

'Yes, mum.' Mrs. Cray, remembering her last interview with Mrs. Quekett, and ignorant as to what dealings the Court people may now wish to have with her, is rather stiff and reserved at first, and stands upon her dignity.

'I have come to ask if you can do me a favour, Mrs. Cray. I have some friends staying with me who want some muslin dresses got up in a hurry for a flower-show at Fenton, and the Court laundress cannot undertake to let us have them by Wednesday. Could you?'

'Well, that depends a deal upon what they are like, mum,' replies Mrs. Cray; whereupon follows a vivid description of puffs and flounces and laces, quite unnecessary to the well-doing of my story.

'I don't see why I shouldn't give you satisfaction, mum,' is the laundress's concluding sentence; 'for it won't be the first time as I've worked for the Court gentle-folk by a many.'

'Indeed! I never heard your name till this afternoon, when my maid mentioned it to me.'

'That's likely enough, mum. I don't suppose you would go to hear it mentioned; but I worked for the Court for four years all the same. And it was a hard day for me, with all my poor children (six of them, if there's one), when I got turned away for asking my due.'

'Who turned you away, Mrs. Cray?'

'Why, bless you, mum, Mrs. Quekett, as was mistress of the Court then—who else should have done it?—and only because I wanted my three weeks' money, as I believe was lining her own pockets all the time. It's been a heavy loss to me, mum. But where's the use of talking, when a woman like that, as no one in the village has a good word for, is queen, and nothing less? You'll hardly believe it, mum, but she ordered me straight out of the house then and there, and forbid even the servants to send me their bits of things—and that was a couple or more pounds a quarter out of my pocket, let alone the other.'

Irene grows rather red during this harangue, and stands with her eyes on the floor, trying to break the tip of her parasol by digging it into a dusty crevice between the flags. She does not relish hearing this common woman speak the truth, and as soon as there is a break in the conversation she resents it.

'Well, Quekett is not mistress of the Court now, Mrs. Cray, as I suppose I need not tell you; and her likes and dislikes are nothing whatever to me. We shall often have friends staying with us, and the washing is likely to be more than our laundress can do. At all events, I can promise you shall have back the servants' linen; and, if I am satisfied with the way in which you get up the dresses I

speak of, you shall have some of mine also.'

'Oh! thank you, mum, kindly. I saw you was a real lady the minute I set eyes on you; and as for my son there, who's seen you a many times, "Mother," he says to me—'

'Yes, yes!' interrupts Irene, anxious to cut short so embarrassing an eulogium; 'and I shall be sure to have the dresses by Wednesday, shall I not?'

'We can let the lady have them by Wednesday, can't we, Myra?' says Mrs. Cray, appealing to her niece. 'This is Monday, and you feels well enough to help, don't you?'

'Yes, I'll help,' is the listless answer.

'Is that your daughter? Is she ill?' demands Irene.

'She's my niece, mum, and but a poor creetur just now—there's no denying of it.'

'Indeed she does look very ill,' says Irene, sympathisingly, as she approaches Myra's side, and gazes with sad interest at the girl's hollow cheeks and staring eyes, in which the traces of tears are still visible. 'Do you suffer any pain?'

At first Myra is disposed to answer rudely, or not at all. She is sensitively alive to the fact of her altered appearance, and always ready to take umbrage at any allusion made to it; but she looks up into the sweet, kind face that is bent over hers, and feels forced to be courteous even against her own will.

'None now—sometimes I do.'

'Where is it? You do not mind my asking, do you? Perhaps I might send you something that would do you good.'

'Here!' replied Myra, pressing her hand just below her collar-bones, 'at night, when the cough's bad, and I can't sleep for it. I

sometimes feel as though I should go mad with the pain here.'

'And what kind of a pain is it?'

'It's just a gnawing—nothing more; and I'm a little sore sometimes.'

'And she can't eat nothing, poor dear,' interposes Mrs. Cray. 'She turns against meat and pudding as though they was poison; but she drinks water by the gallon. I'm sure the buckets of water as that girl have drunk—'

'And does not washing make you worse?' again inquires Irene.

'Sometimes; but I don't stand at it long—I can't.'

'And how do you employ your time, then, Myra?'

'I'm just home from a job in London, ma'am. I'm good at keeping accounts, and such like—it's what I've been brought up to; but it tried me rather this hot weather, and I'm glad to be back in Priestley again.'

'She ain't fit for nothing of that sort now,' interpolates Mrs. Cray.

'I dare say not. She must take care of herself till she gets stronger,' says Irene, cheerfully. 'I will send you some soup from the Court, Myra—perhaps that will tempt you to eat. And are you fond of reading? Would you like to have some books?'

'Oh, she's a fine scholar, mum,' again puts in Mrs. Cray. 'Many and many's the time I've thought we'd given her too much larning; but her poor uncle that's dead and gone used to say—' Here she interrupts herself to give her skirts a good shake. 'Get out of that, do, you varmint! What do you mean by hanging on to me after that fashion?' — which adjuration is succeeded by the appearance of Tommy's curly head and dirty face in the full light of day.

'Whose child is that?' cries Irene, suddenly.

The question is so unexpected,

that no one seems inclined to answer it. Joel changes feet awkwardly upon the hearth, which he has never quitted, and Myra turns round in her chair and looks full into Irene's face, whose eyes are riveted upon the child, still clinging for protection to the skirts of his nurse.

Mrs. Cray is the first to find her tongue.

'What! this boy, mum, as is hanging on my gound in this inconvenient fashion? — but lor! children will be children,' she continues, as she puts her hand on Tommy's head and pushes him forward for Irene's better inspection. 'Well, he's not mine, though I look on him most as my own. To tell truth, he's a nuss-child.'

'A nurse-child! You are paid for keeping him; but who, then, are his parents?'

'They're very respectable people, mum—quite gentlefolks, as you may say. I think his pa's in the grocery line; but I couldn't speak for certain. My money is paid regular, and that's all I have to look after.'

'Oh, of course—of course. And —what is his name?'

'He's called Tommy, mum. Go and speak to the lady, Tommy.'

'But his surname?'

'Well, we haven't much call here to use his other name, mum; and I'm sure it's almost slipped my memory. What's the name as the gentleman writes as owns of Tommy, Joel?' she continues, appealing, in rather a conscious manner, to her son.

'I don't know. You'd better ask Myra,' he replies, gruffly.

'Brown,' says Myra, quickly; 'the child's name is Brown. You might go to remember as much as that, aunt.'

'Oh, it doesn't signify,' interrupts Irene, who perceives she has stumbled on an unwelcome sub-

ject, 'it is of no consequence;' and then, in her fresh summer dress, she kneels down on the uncovered stone floor, that has been trampled by dusty feet all day long. 'Come here, Tommy. Won't you come and speak to me? Look what pretty things I have here;' and she dangles her watch-chain, with its bunch of glittering charms, before his eyes.

Tommy cannot resist the bait: curiosity casts out fear; and in another moment his deep blue eyes are bent greedily upon the flashing baubles, whilst his dirty little fingers are leaving their dull impress upon pencil-case and locket and seal.

'Oh dear! mum, he ain't fit as you should touch him; and his feet are trampling the edge of your gound. Here, Jenny, make haste and put Tommy under the pump till the lady looks at him.'

'No, no! praydon't; he is doing no harm.'

So the dirty little brat is left in peace, whilst the lady takes stock of his eyes and mouth and hair. Once, in his ecstasy at finding a gold fish amongst her treasures, he raises his eyes suddenly to hers, and she darts forward as suddenly and kisses him. Then, becoming aware that she has done something rather out of the common, and that Mrs. Cray and Joel and Myra are looking at her with surprise, Irene rises to her feet, dragging the bunch of charms far out of disappointed Tommy's reach, and, with a heightened colour, stammers something very like an apology.

'I like little children,' she says, hurriedly; 'and—and—he has very blue eyes. Are you fond of lollipops, Tommy?'

'I want the fiss,' says Tommy, from behind Mrs. Cray's gown again.

'Oh fie! then you can't have it.

Now be'ave yourself, or I'll give you a good hiding,' is the gentle rejoinder.

Irene feels very much inclined to give him the 'fiss,' but has sufficient sense to know it would be a very foolish thing to do; so she takes a shilling out of her purse instead.

'See, Tommy! a beautiful bright new shilling! Won't you go and buy some lollipops with it?'

Tommy advances his hand far enough to grab the coin, and then retreats in silence.

'Say "thankye" to the lady,' suggests Mrs. Cray.

But Tommy is dumb.

'Say "thankye" at once; d'ye hear?' and a good shake is followed by an equally good cuff on the small delinquent's head.

'Oh! don't strike him,' cries Irene, earnestly—'pray don't strike him; he is but a baby. Poor little Tommy! I am sure he will say thank you, when he knows me better.'

'You're too good to him, mum; you can't do nothing with children without hitting 'em now and then: which you will find when you have a young family of your own.'

'I must go now. My friends are waiting for me,' says Irene, whose colour has risen at the last allusion. 'Good evening, Mrs. Cray! Send up for the dresses to-night; and the cook shall give you some soup at the same time, for your niece.'

But she has not long stepped over the threshold, before Myra is after her; and they meet by the ivy-covered well.

'You'll—you'll—be coming this way again, won't you?' says the girl, panting even with that slight effort.

'If you wish it, certainly. Would you like me to come and see you, Myra?'

'Very much! There are few

faces here look at me as yours does.'

'My poor girl! then I will come, with the greatest pleasure.'

'Soon?'

'Very soon.' And so they part; and Irene joins Mary Cavendish and Oliver Ralston, who have been walking up and down the green lane outside the cottage, waiting for her.

'What a time you've been!'

'Have I? There's a poor young woman there in a consumption, or something of the sort, who interested me. And such a dear little child: a nurse-child of Mrs. Cray's. I stayed to talk to them.'

'How long is it since you have developed a love for children, Irene?' says Mary Cavendish, laughing. 'I did not think they were at all in your line.'

'I never disliked them; and this baby has such beautiful earnest eyes.'

'It is remarkable what lovely eyes some of the children of the poor have. I remember, when I was in Berwick—'

'Let us get over the stile here; it leads to the Court by a much shorter way,' exclaims Irene, interrupting her cousin in the rudest manner in the world. But so is Miss Cavendish always interrupted if she ventures to make the slightest reference to her visit of the summer. She has been dying, heaps of times, to relate all the glories of that period to Irene, but she has never been able to advance farther than the fact that they took place. The mere name of Berwick is sufficient to send Mrs. Mordaunt out of the room or—as in the present instance—over the stile.

Irene cannot get the remembrance of poor Myra's hollow features and attenuated figure out of

her head. It forms the staple subject of her conversation at the dinner-table, and she talks of it all the evening, while her guests are rambling about the gardens and shrubbery; and she is sitting on a bench with her husband in the dusk, and flirting with him in her little quiet way.

'It is very sad,' says Colonel Mordaunt for about the fiftieth time, 'and I'm very glad that you should have fallen in with her, my dear. It is in such cases that the rich can do so much to help the poor. Sickness is bad enough to bear when we are surrounded by every luxury; it must be twice as hard when one is deprived of the necessaries of life.' And he continues to puff solemnly into the evening air, while his arm tightens round the waist of his wife.

'Yes,' says Irene, leaning up against him, 'and you should see how thin and pale she is, Philip. Her bones look as though they were coming through her skin. And she has no appetite, her aunt says. I have ordered cook to send her down some soup and jelly.'

'Quite right. I am afraid you would find several more in the same condition if you were to look for them. Country poor are too proud to beg.'

'I will make a point of looking. But I never saw any one so terribly thin before. And her eyes are hollow, poor thing!'

'You seem to have taken a great fancy to this girl, Irene.'

'She has awakened a great interest in me, though I cannot tell why. She seems more than ill—she looks unhappy.'

'And have you told Colonel Mordaunt about the child you took such a fancy to?' laughs Mary Cavendish, who is loitering near enough to hear the last words. 'It's a new thing for Irene to be

running after babies — isn't it, Colonel Mordaunt?'

Irene flushes; it is not so dark but he can see the change, and a new tenderness creeps over him.

'What baby, darling?' he says, as he presses her closer to him. Irene is vexed at the turn in the conversation; she is not a bit sentimental, and she cannot affect to be so.'

'It was not a baby,' she replies, almost curtly: 'it was a big child of two or three years old.'

'And you took a fancy to it—why?'

Colonel Mordaunt's 'why' has a totally different bearing to the 'why' that falls upon Irene's ears. She grows scarlet, and almost starts away from him.

'Why!—why! For no particular reason—only—because—I don't care for children in general, I know—but—but—'

Whilst she is hammering out a reasonable answer, her husband supplies it.

'But you thought,' he whispers close into her ear, 'that some day you might possess such a child of your own, Irene!'

'I—I thought—Good heavens, no! I never thought anything of the kind,' she exclaims aloud; and then, out of sheer nervousness, she laughs. The laugh grates on Colonel Mordaunt's ear; he draws himself away, not offended, but hurt.

'If such a prospect holds no charms for you, Irene, you might keep the unpleasant truth to yourself. It is not necessary to laugh at me.'

'Laugh!—did I laugh?' she replies, still tittering. 'I'm sure I didn't know it. I don't think I quite know what I did do.' And with this, the incomprehensible creature falls to crying, not heavily, but in a smart little shower of tears that savour strongly of the

hysterical. Colonel Mordaunt does not know what to make of it; he has been little used to women, and this one seems to him, at times, a mystery; but he adopts the safe course: he throws his arms about her neck and begs her not to think any more about it. And, apparently, Irene adopts his advice, for she dries her eyes, and flits away from his side, and the next minute he hears her light laugh ringing out through the shrubbery at some jest of Oliver Ralston's.

They are a very happy party at Fen Court now; even Isabella Mordaunt seems to have crept out of her shell, and to dare to enjoy herself after a demurely quiet fashion; and as for Colonel Mordaunt, he has been a different man since rid of the presence of the awful Mrs. Quekett. Not that he was quite himself for some days after the housekeeper's summary departure. A gloomy dread seemed hanging over him at that time, for which Irene was unable to account. But at the end of a fortnight, Mrs. Quekett's temper having evaporated with change of air, she thought fit to send her master a letter, written as though nothing unpleasant had happened between them, which intimated her whereabouts, and wound up with her compliments to his 'good lady.'

Colonel Mordaunt's mind was instantly relieved; and the next post took back a lengthy epistle in reply. Irene saw neither of these letters, nor wished to do so; but she could not help observing how much more at ease her husband appeared to be after receiving and despatching them.

And with the fear of Mrs. Quekett's everlasting displeasure lifted off his mind, Colonel Mordaunt became pleasanter and more lively than she had seen him since their marriage. He petted Irene all day long, chaffed. Isabella, and ap-

peared thoroughly to enjoy the companionship of Oliver, as though, in the affection of these three, he had all he desired in this life to make him happy.

His wife had begun to wish that it could go on thus for ever, and that they had no friends coming to break in upon their domestic felicity. But the guests have arrived, and the unruffled intercourse is continued, and Irene is being carried quietly along the stream of life as though she had left all its storms behind her, and there were no black clouds gathering in the future.

* * * *

Colonel Mordaunt is of an exceedingly benevolent nature; he takes great interest in the poor of the parish, and never neglects an opportunity of sympathising with or relieving them; but after a while he does grow very sick of the name of Myra Cray. It appears as though his wife were always harping on it; every topic, from whatever point started, veers round, in some mysterious manner, to the sick girl at the laundress's cottage; and whenever he misses Irene, he is sure to hear that she has 'just run down' to the end of the village with a book, or a pudding. At last he grows fidgety on the subject.

' You are, surely, never going out in this broiling sun!' he exclaims, one hot morning in October, as he meets his wife arrayed for walking, a basket of fruit on one arm, and a bottle of wine under the other. ' I cannot allow it, Irene. You will get fever or something of the sort: you must wait till the day is cooler.'

' Oh, I can't wait, Philip,' she says, coaxingly, for poor Myra is so much worse. She broke a bloodvessel last night, and they have just sent up to tell me so.'

'What good can you do by going down?'

'I don't know: but I think she will feel my presence to be a comfort; she has taken a great fancy to me, you know. Besides, I want to carry her a few grapes.'

'Send them by a servant. I cannot have you risk your health by encountering such fatigue for any one.'

'It will not fatigue; and I want to see Myra myself.'

'Take the pony-chaise, then.'

'No, indeed! before your lazy grooms will have put the harness together, I shall be by her bedside.' And running past him, she takes her way down to the village.

Colonel Mordaunt is vexed. He likes his wife to be interested in the parishioners, but her visits of late have been confined to the Crays—who are generally considered to be the least deserving of them all. Besides, he argues, the house is full of guests, to whom she owes more attention than is consonant with absenting herself from their company at all hours of the day. When they meet at luncheon, consequently, he is what is termed a little 'put out'; but she is too full of her protégée to notice it.

'Poor Myra!' she sighs, as she takes her seat at the table. 'I am afraid there is little hope for her; she is so weak, she cannot speak above a whisper.'

'She oughtn't to be allowed to speak at all, after having broken a bloodvessel,' says her husband, shortly. 'Will you take a cutlet, Irene?'

'No—nothing, thank you. I couldn't eat; my whole mind is absorbed by the thought of that poor girl.'

'But you are not going to allow it to spoil your luncheon, are you? Running about all the morning, and eating nothing on the top of

it. The end of it will be, you will be ill.'

'Not while there is work for me to do—as there ever is.'

'Nonsense! you talk of it as though it were a duty. It is a much greater duty for you to eat when your husband asks you to do so.'

'Don't ask me then, dear Philip; for I really can't.'

He does not press her, but directs his attention to the rest of the company; whilst she leans back in her chair, pale, pensive, and almost entirely silent.

'You won't go out again?' he says to her, as the meal is concluded and they rise from table.

'Oh no! I don't think so.'

'Go, then, and lie down, my dear. You have been too much excited. I never saw you more overcome.'

'I think I will lie down, just for an hour or two. My head aches terribly.'

Then his trifling annoyance vanishes, and he is all sympathy and tenderness; supporting her upstairs with his arm around her waist, and coaxing and petting her like a sick child, until she has exchanged her dress for a cool wrapper, and laid down on her bed: when he steps about the room, on tiptoe, like a woman, pulling down the blinds and putting everything within her reach that he thinks she may require.

'I shall be back by six, my own darling,' he whispers, in farewell; 'and I hope you will have had a good sleep by that time.'

'I dare say I shall,' she murmurs, dreamily; and then he leaves her. At the appointed hour he is back again, and entering the room cautiously, for fear of startling her, finds all the blinds drawn up, and Phoebe sitting by the open window, stitching a rent in one of her mistress's dresses.

'Mrs. Mordaunt gone down?' he says, interrogatively.

'Yes, sir. I believe she's gone out, sir.'

'Out! Not out of doors again?'

'I think so, sir. A message came up from Cray's for my missus, about four o'clock, and she put on her things at once and went to them. I believe the young woman's sent for her, sir.'

'Too bad! too bad!' exclaims Colonel Mordaunt, angrily—though referring more to the Crays than to Irene. 'But I suppose she will be back to dinner.'

'I suppose so, sir. My missus said she would wear a white muslin this evening, and I was just stitching this one together for her.'

But dinner-time arrives, and they are all assembled in the

dining-room, and still the mistress of the house is absent.

'It is close upon seven: she must be here directly,' remarks Colonel Mordaunt, though uneasily.

'A note from Cray's, if you please, sir?' says the footman, placing a crumpled piece of paper before him.

He opens it and reads:

'DEAR PHILIP,—Pray don't wait dinner for me. It is impossible that I can come home just yet.

'Yours,

'IRENE.'

'Serve the dinner at once!' exclaims Colonel Mordaunt, in a voice of real displeasure, as he tears up the note into a dozen fragments and casts them into the empty grate behind him.

(To be continued.)

LOVE AND MONEY.

A Study.

'WHEN love and all the world were young,'—
 Oh ! golden age by the poet sung ;
 For though it exist but on mythic page,
 'Tis a fiction pleasant, this golden age :
 Now love and the world are grown cunning and old,
 And the golden age is the age of gold !

And, oh ! the blue,
 That deep, clear blue,
 In the eyes of the Cupid whom once we knew
 Happy, careless, sunny and true,
 Is tinged by the prevalent aureate hue.
 There is something wrong with his gossamer wings,
 Which hang like wretched bedraggled things ;
 There rests a cloud on his visage fair,
 A golden cloud—but gold is care ;
 And as for the heart, that symbol old
 Of love he carried—'tis turned to gold !

A ring is made, let the fight begin,—
 Who are the combatants? Which will win?
 And well-bred speculation is rise
 As to the genuine odds in the strife.
 Moneybags *versus* the lady's pet,
 That is the match ; now, who will bet?

A curious crowd
 Is gathered there,
 And the champions, too,
 An ill-matched pair ;
 One all buoyant with hope and youth,
 Fondly dreaming that love and truth
 Can outweigh half a million ;
 The other a strange, misshapen wight,
 But looking as if he meant to fight,
 Void of each possible manly grace,
 With yellow eye and jaundiced face,
 Like a liverless Indian civilian.



LOVE A

MONEY.



But, oh ! for the hopes of the youthful knight
Whom daughters love and duennas slight,
 But whose purse has scarcely a stray ‘ bob ;’
‘Tis weight and substance carry the day,
And naught will avail in the coming fray ;
Or love or beauty, or youth or health,
‘Tis the longest of odds on the man whose wealth
 Is the wealth of a Bengal nabob.
And she, the lovely, expectant fair,
The prize of battle, sits calmly there,
 Like the bride of classic story,
What time in famed Ætolia’s land
There fought, by the river’s golden strand,
 ‘Gainst the river-god’s strength and glory,
 Alcmena’s son,
 Who conquering, won
 The Princess Dejanira.
Yes ; there she sits, the *insouciante* fair,
With unflushed brow, and with golden hair ;
 And, as to her whole attire, a
Girl of the period, skilled in the art
Well to dissemble each throb of heart.

A few more rounds, and the battle is o’er ;
Moneybag victor—would you more?
And the social critics of the fray
Forejudged aright the fate of the day ;
As for the girl of the period, she
Bows to society’s just decree.
Does she see, through a mist of tears,
The buried hopes of her girlish years ?
Or do her eyes grow heavy and dim
The while her heart flies back to *him* ?
Murmur sadly her lips his name ?
Bodes her bosom of sin and shame ?
Trembles her soul, that thought beside—
An unloved husband, a venal bride ?
What of it ? girls of the period sing,
‘ Mammon is Hymen, and Moneybag king.’

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

A FIRST NIGHT.

THE first night of a new play. There are some people who never miss it. One goes out of curiosity, another professionally. The regular playgoer likes to be present because his attendance on these occasions has become a habit with him, just as the Derby is with another man. One goes because he is a friend of the dramatist; another because he is not; a third is there on account of his interest in the management; a fourth simply in the hope that the management has made a mistake. The critics go in fulfilment of their calling. Of course they are bored whether the play is good or bad. It is the thing to be bored. Sometimes they are indeed to be pitied; but they take out their torture tenfold when they sit down to scarify the piece. The most astonishing thing is, when you think they have been dreadfully bored, and when you are glad that they have gall at home for ink, to find by their papers that they have been delighted. At other times, when you think they have an opportunity of honestly praising a piece, you encounter fierce condemnation. Truly, critics and criticism are inscrutable. I give them up. Thank goodness I am not professionally engaged, except once in a way. Now and then I sit amidst the critics with my bristles up, look bored, feel bored, and go out envying the people who are not called upon to write their opinions of what they have seen and heard.

But we all like a first night; it is so unlike any other night. You see people whom you wish to see. There is a sort of suppressed excitement in the house which gives an outside interest to the play. Then there is always the chance

of a row. Pieces have been killed on a first night. It is true the custom of 'taking care' of the house has grown of late into such a habit that a sort of check has been established. Something is indeed required to neutralise the coldness of the general *habitués* of theatres on first nights; but a crowd of applauders scattered through the house rather overdoes the business.

Let us look round a first night's house and see who the people are in the stalls and boxes. They are the actors who interest one more than the people on the stage. We will see the play itself when we have read the notices. In the stage-box is Mr. John Oxenford, a white-headed, genial-looking gentleman, and critic of the 'Times.' It is not necessary to mention the satellite who always accompanies him. But in the same box we notice Miss Neilson (Mrs. Lee) and her husband. Mr. Lee was the subject of a great practical joke in America, arranged by Mr. Sothern, and mentioned in the papers a short time ago. The 'New York Herald' devoted a couple of columns to the story. Miss Neilson is quite as pretty as her photographs. She wears a low dress, very much after the fashion of the portrait of Nell Gwynne in 'Pepys' Diary.' Mr. Oxenford will talk during the performance, but when you read his criticism in the 'Times' you find that he knows all about the play. In an adjacent box are the Levys of the 'Telegraph.' Their chief critic is nursing his leg in the stalls. He is a young man, with a brown beard and moustache, and a well-formed, intellectual head. His name was mentioned in the action brought by Charles Reade

against the 'Morning Advertiser,' and it is likely to crop up in a libel suit pending, I believe, against the defunct 'Zig-Zag.' Mr. Clement Scott has made himself known by his well-written and pungent criticisms. He was 'Almaviva' in the London 'Figaro,' and he writes for the 'Observer' and the 'Telegraph.' Close by Mr. Scott sits, silent and muffled up to his chin, Mr. Heraud, who used to write for the 'Athenæum,' and is the hero of that story of Jerrold, in which Mr. Heraud's poem about 'Hell' is mentioned. The cleanly-shaven face, somewhat cynical in its expression, and ornamented for the time with a pair of glasses, looking out of a box on the other side of the house is the well-known countenance of Charles Dickens, son of the famous author of 'Pickwick.' Mr. Dickens writes those excellent dramatic notices which appear in 'The Queen.' The bright-eyed young man by his side, intently watching the piece, is Albery, whom Dickens will presently chaff on account of the failure of 'Oriana,' but the proprietor of 'All the Year Round' will get a shot back quite as wounding as his own. Albery is clever at repartee, but apt to be personal. Not more so, perhaps, than the gentleman who is just entering the box, Mr. Stephen Fiske, the husband of Mrs. John Wood, for whom Albery is engaged upon a new play. Mr. Fiske rubs his eyes, and fires off a quiet sally about the piece, at which Dickens turns round to shrug his shoulders and laugh. Mr. Fiske came over to England, some years ago, with the winning yacht in the famous international race, a graphic description of which he wrote for the 'Times' and 'All the Year Round.' He was for many years the dramatic critic of the 'New York Herald,'

and is now credited with the stings of the 'Hornet,' of which paper he is the proprietor. It is not generally known that Fiske was the author of 'English Photographs, by an American,' and the magazine papers which caused a sensation under the *nom de plume* of 'An American Fenian.'

It is a capital night for celebrities, this first night of our sketch. Shirley Brooks, the editor of 'Punch,' is in the stalls, and in the next seat one of his principal contributors, Mr. F. C. Burnand, who gets up something like Mario, though there is no resemblance between the two. Mr. Burnand is a handsome man, for all that, and one of the most industrious of our public writers. Looking over the stalls from the dress-circle, into which they have been forced by their late arrival and a pressure below, are Leopold Lewis, of 'Bells' fame, who is industriously stroking his whiskers; and Mr. Tom Purnell, who is evidently expressing his opinion of the piece in tones sufficiently loud to attract general attention. Mr. Lewis was editor of 'The Mask,' which had a short, but brilliant career; Mr. Purnell wrote those 'Athenæum' criticisms, signed Q., which Charles Reade scarified in an article in which he called Purnell 'a cipher, signed with an initial.'

Turning again to the stalls, our glass falls upon the puckered, but genial face of E. L. Blanchard, whose knowledge of the drama and its history, past and present, is perhaps unequalled. A round-faced, kindly-looking lady in black (whom few people seem to know, and those few the more elderly men of the time), sitting at the back of the stalls and talking to another lady, evidently her sister, is Mrs. Charles Dickens. Her sister is Mrs. Romer, a widow.

They are neighbours in the Regent's Park district, and evidently enjoy first nights. One of Mrs. Dickens's younger sons, a bright, intelligent young fellow, has recently been reading, for charitable institutions, some of his father's works, and has acquitted himself with credit. Mrs. Dickens is a noble woman, never to have obtruded her story upon society. They say she has a box full of 'David Copperfield's' love letters. Dickens, whose correspondence was always studied, must have written charming love letters; how charming, we may never know.

Mr. Frith, the artist, is sitting near the orchestra with one of his sons, and farther on is Mr. Moy Thomas, of the 'Daily News.' Close by sits Mr. Fildes, a young, earnest toiler in the fields of art, who is destined for fame and fortune. The dark gentleman to whom he is talking is Joseph Hatton, editor of 'The Gentleman's Magazine,' and, what is perhaps more, author of 'The Valley of Poppies,' an *edition de luxe* of which is to be published by and by, with illustrations by Fildes, who drew the pictures that illustrated Dickens's last thoughts in 'Edwin Drood.' Mr. Hersee, a well-known musical critic, finds himself yonder in the midst of a bevy of ladies, whom he would not disturb, as he

goes out, for the world. Mr. Dunphy, of the 'Morning Post,' calm and self-possessed, with the living image of a pretty girl whose portrait hung No. 1 on the Academy walls two years ago by his side; and Mr. E. C. Barnes, the artist, whose 'Scarlet Letter' has, strange to say, been crowded out of this year's Academy, make up our rapid sketch of the front of the house.

On the occasion in question the piece was a success. We called the author, and cheered him loudly. It is seldom that a piece is damned nowadays. A notable exception occurred the other night at the Adelphi, when a new piece was hissed off the stage, and the management had to announce that it would not be performed again. 'Up a Tree' and something else, however, would take its place, said the gentleman, who had the happiness of speaking to the house, which burst into fits of laughter at this announcement of 'Up a Tree.'

If there are any readers of 'London Society' in search of a new theatrical sensation, and who know nothing of first nights, in the professional sense, let them book stalls for the next notable occasion, and compare notes with this brief sketch, and the articles that are to follow it from the pen of

ROBIN GOODFELLOW.



THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

**THE EREWHONIANS AGAIN—THE ‘MATRIMONIAL GAZETTE’—PRIVATE THEATRICALS—
THE AMATEURS—DANCING DOGS—A THREATENED CLÔTURE—SOME PICTURES AT
THE ACADEMY.**

SOME few months ago the chronicler of the ‘Talk of the Town,’ in making a few observations on a book called ‘Erewhon,’ ventured to suggest that the notions of the Erewhonians were not altogether so illusory as some practical people might think, and that there is a growing tendency in many minds to reverse the positions of the criminal and the invalid — to compassionate the former and to be harsh upon the latter. Certain circumstances have recently occurred which compel **FREE LANCE** to return to the subject, as far as the aspect of crime is concerned, and as they have been much talked about, it may perhaps be as well to take another glance at the question. Not long ago a horrible murder was committed in London. It was, apparently, of the most abjectly brutal kind, for it was absolutely purposeless and unnecessary, as far as common sense could gather from the surrounding facts. An individual occupying a respectable position was recognised by certain witnesses as answering to their own description of the murderer, and he was at once arrested and subjected to a severe process of examination before a magistrate. In the result the charge against the accused was dismissed, and he was set free. The generous sympathy of the British public — romantic enough at times — was instantly aroused, and a very handsome subscription was realised on behalf of the person whose identity was unfortunately mistaken, and who to a certain extent profited by the error. No doubt this was all very

right and very proper. Nothing can be more fearful than to be accused of such a crime; and no compensation can be too great for such suffering. But public sympathy, unfortunately, went into extremes. Not content with offering all reasonable amends, the police authorities were extravagantly condemned for having acted upon suspicions which their experience justified them in regarding as *prima facie* serious; and in so terrible a case it should have been sufficiently obvious that no evidence ought to be neglected. Now, it is impossible to deny that the position of the innocent accused was of the most painful description, or that a subscription amounting to a thousand pounds could adequately compensate the unfortunate man for the temporary inconvenience and possible agonies of mind he underwent; but we surely ought not to forget that the interests of society are paramount, and that when all social life suffers from the commission of a hideous crime, even the slightest opportunities should not be neglected which might tend to the discovery and punishment of the culprit. Heaven forbid that I should deprecate the warm sympathy that was shown to the unhappy man who successfully proved his innocence, but I cannot forbear deprecating quite as strongly the vituperations which were cast upon the guardians of the public security. Mistakes must and will occur at times, and inasmuch as our police system is being perpetually condemned by ready writers in the daily press as insufficient and in-

competent, it is not easy to see how it is likely to be improved if it is never to act where suspicion is not the same as certainty. If the accused had turned out to be the guilty man everybody would, perhaps, have found fault with the police for not having laid hands upon him sooner. The moral of the narrative is sufficiently obvious.

The next case to which I would refer is that of the gas-stokers who were recently feted and treated as heroic martyrs on being released from prison. These persons were tried, found guilty of the offence imputed to them, and punished according to law. It is unnecessary for me to recapitulate the details of their case; it is sufficient to say that no strike was ever so universally condemned as that in which these gentlemen were prominent. I merely wish to observe that in their case the Erewhonian theory was fully carried out, and their crime, with its consequences, was treated as a subject for deep compassion by a circle of admiring friends. I am only surprised that a testimonial in the shape of a comfortable annuity has not been presented to each of these long-suffering assertors of a principle.

Lastly, I feel compelled to refer to a more recent case. A highly educated and intelligent gentleman, a member of a liberal profession, was convicted of theft, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Nobody denies the truth of the charge or the bare justice of the sentence. But the Erewhonians have taken the matter up, and have opened a subscription list for the purpose of placing the criminal in a comfortable position when he has worked out the sentence which his own wilful act has brought upon him. It is urged, and I am painfully aware

of the strength of the plea, that this is an exceptional case. An individual with the tastes, education, and sensitiveness of a gentleman has found the work of life so hard that he has been compelled, in his struggle for existence, to appropriate the property of his neighbour for the purposes of his own support without asking their permission. The immediate result is that which usually attends larceny, but the ultimate consequence is a subscription list and a possible competence. Had this individual belonged to a lower order in the social scale, nobody but the gaol chaplain would have taken the smallest interest in him. This state of facts cannot but awaken reflections which are not altogether pleasant. It suggests in a lively manner that there is 'something rotten in the state' of England. We find ourselves asking the startling question, Is the crime of an educated man to be deplored and punished more or less than a corresponding error on the part of an uneducated man? We may admit to the full that in the case we are considering the punishment is far more terrible than that which awaits the professional predator, to whom it is a matter of comparative indifference whether he is living at the expense of the community in the gaol, or flourishing at the expense of the individuals whose pockets he occasionally picks in the streets. Still, philanthropists are bound to remember that the professional thief and the amateur larcenist are both citizens; both have an equal claim to be rescued from infamy, and it is hard to see why a great distinction is to be drawn between them. No doubt it may be said, and said with a certain amount of truth, that the amateur is willing to gain his livelihood by honest work, and

the professional is not, and that the former has failed in getting any opportunity. But if this is to be put forward as a sound argument on behalf of the unhappy amateur, the public, who are called upon to sympathise and subscribe, are certainly justified in demanding that all the circumstances of the case shall be fully laid before them, and that they shall have an opportunity of deciding how far the guilt of the amateur was physically inevitable. I would not have it thought for a moment that I quarrel with the warm and generous feeling that prompts many excellent persons to rush forward with their ready gold and cheques to give this particular criminal a good chance of making another start in life—for it is never too late to mend—but I would only ask them to consider where and why they draw the line. And I would venture to go a little farther, and suggest that it is possible that a deeper and more discriminating search might show them that there are scores of men living hard and unhappy lives whose claim to generosity and true sympathy has not as yet been enhanced by the questionable advantage of conviction of deliberate dishonesty.

Various and wonderful are the conditions of this social life of ours, and not the least remarkable among the signs of the times is the existence of a journal 'devoted to the Promotion of Marriage and Conjugal Felicity.' Persons in the daily habit of walking along Pall Mall know how persistently they are annoyed by certain news-vendors who anxiously press upon them the purchase of a certain paper called 'The Matrimonial News.' Once, and once only, did I see a blushing youth buy a copy,

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but an unconquerable shyness on the part of the public prevents, apparently, any large sale of this humane weekly in the open street; but I am informed that the proprietors have no reason to be sorry that they have started in the Promotion - of - Conjugal - Felicity line. A copy has fallen into the hands of *FREE LANCE*, and he admits to having been somewhat startled by its contents. Upwards of three hundred persons, all (according to their own account) tolerably well-to-do, good-looking, good-tempered, and eminently fitted for the mutual duties and responsibilities of domestic life, advertise for matrimonial partners! It is distressing to think in what narrow circles these heart-hungry ladies and gentlemen must hitherto have passed their lives, and we cannot but compassionate them for not having found among their friends and acquaintances the kindred soul without which their destiny is incomplete. But after reading through a few of these gushing advertisements we cannot help thinking that unforeseen difficulties may arise when the answers are sent in and the advertiser has to make his choice. For instance, the clergyman, aged thirty-two, with an income of 2,500*l.* a year and a nice residence, who desires to open correspondence with a lady with a view to an early marriage, must be simply overwhelmed by the cartes-de-visite and letters of self-recommendation he has undoubtedly received by this time. We own to feeling extremely curious as to whether the early marriage has yet taken place, and, if so, we should much like to know, for future guidance, the process of selection by which the reverend gentleman eventually decided upon the ruler of his home and his affections. How anxiously he must have

studied the features portrayed in the photographic galaxy; how thoughtfully he must have regarded the various mouths and chins, and dubiously wondered which gave the best hope of equable temperament and cheerful manners; nor can we suppose that suspicion altogether slumbered as he gazed upon the artistic representations of the curling locks or ample chignons. And then with what deep searchings of heart must he have gradually weeded out the fair candidates for two thousand a year and a nice residence, till he found his choice narrowed to some half dozen eager damsels, one of which was destined to preside at his hospitable board, and relieve him of those household troubles which had possibly driven him into the arms of the editor of the 'Matrimonial News.' But then the terrible moment must have come—which is it to be? Possibly reminiscences of college days may have come to his rescue, and we think it far from improbable that the good clergyman shuffled the photographs in his hat, and drew out one at a time, determined to marry the young lady whose carte should leap forth last from the lot. Further speculation is needless; let us hope that Fate has favoured him. But we cannot forbear the reflection that, if marrying by advertisement is likely to become the fashion, domestic happiness will, in all probability, become the exception, and not the rule, as we would fain hope that it now is. Persons who 'open correspondence' with strangers 'with a view to early marriage' will inevitably find out too late that a hasty and ill-considered marriage is perhaps the greatest curse that man or woman can bring upon themselves. We must all fully appreciate the benevolent motives expressed by the

editor of 'The Matrimonial News' in his address to the public, and we have no doubt that he is fully aware of his responsibilities, but, at the same time, it is impossible to repress a very grave fear that this well-intentioned gentleman will have a great deal to answer for in the matter of nagging wives, surly husbands, and ill-assorted unions generally; and it is sad to think how many curses, 'not loud, but deep,' will possibly be poured upon his devoted head.

In the April number of 'Macmillan's Magazine' Mr. F. C. Burnand commenced a biography entitled 'My Time, and what I have done with it.' The title of the story suggests a confession of no ordinary nature, and we hope in due course to be let into the secrets which prompted the cheery author's 'Happy Thoughts,' and the morals of the bright burlesques with which he has revived a drooping stage. What I am looking forward to anxiously is a chapter on Private Theatricals. Here is a theme upon which Mr. Burnand might write luxuriantly, and perhaps detail a melancholy experience. The regular theatre nowadays is, unfortunately, highly capable of leaving a sense of deep depression upon the audience; but the vast majority of amateur performances would be shrouded in the saddest gloom if they were not usually succeeded by the exhilarating effects of supper. Why are such exhibitions usually so extremely bad? The actors are generally intelligent people, and some of them have evidently a certain amount of natural talent. The reason is not very recondite. Amateurs do not, or will not, understand that histrionic abilities are almost worthless if they are not duly drilled. It is not sufficient that the actor

can repeat his words clearly and with proper emphasis: he must recollect that he is playing up to other actors, and he must consider the stage effect upon the audience. If amateurs could see themselves as they are seen, they would, perhaps, realise the fact that their ignorance of stage business and technicalities weighs terribly against their tolerable abilities and evident earnestness. Rushing in to a difficult performance, as they usually do, after half a dozen rehearsals, it never seems to occur to them that they are presenting to their audience what would be an execrably bad first night of representation by trained professionals. They ask a great many people to come and see them act, and scarcely take ordinary pains to do justice to themselves and to pay proper respect to their visitors. They appear to be under an impression that so long as they have a pretty close acquaintance with their words, and can infuse a certain amount of humour or pathos into what they have to say, they have done all that is necessary. The last thing that they think of is the elaborate work of stage management; and hence the usual ludicrous result. What amateur does not know the mutual congratulations that go on behind the cramped wings of the temporary stage erected by Mr. Nathan or Mr. Simmonds—how well the piece is going! That is to say, there has not been a dead stage wait, and no particular strain has been put upon the services of the prompter. Of course, if the object of the actors is merely to arrive at the conclusion of the performance, such congratulations may be well deserved. But if he has any regard for the general effect upon the audience, and the impression he will leave upon their minds after the curtain has finally fallen, the

amateur actor must make up his mind to take far greater trouble about his rehearsals. Amateurs generally appear to think that the object of rehearsals is to satisfy the actors that they are perfect as far as their memories are concerned; they neglect the vast importance of stage *business*, and leave it to take care of itself at the representation, even if they ever give it a serious thought. Whether they go out right or left, whether a table is centre, up the stage or down the stage, whether a 'situation' is effectively arranged or not, whether the entrance or exit of the principal character is dramatically rendered—are matters to which amateurs appear to be sublimely indifferent. The absolute and undeniable truth of this assertion justifies one in saying that the great fault of amateurs rests in their thinking only of their individual selves, and in being totally regardless of their fellows and their audience. Gabble, gabble, gabble, the amateur pours out his words in a resistless flood, totally regardless of the fact that his speech has to travel round a considerable area, and he moves awkwardly about the stage, utterly heedless of the great principle of repose, without which no man can hope to be a successful actor. His companion on the stage may have to say something which wins applause or laughter; the noise is nothing to him—on he goes with his words, caring nothing for the patent fact that the audience are losing the whole point of his speech. If amateurs would only condescend to attend more carefully to their rehearsals, and submit to the stage management of some competent professional, there is no reason why, if they possess an ordinary amount of histrionic power and general intelligence, they should not afford a very to-

lerable evening's entertainment. I am in a position to quote a case in point.

Last Easter week *FREE LANCE* happened to be at that not very lively watering-place, Bournemouth, and he had the good fortune to be present at some amateur performances given on behalf of the Bournemouth Sanatorium, by Sir Percy and Lady Shelley in the elegant theatre at Boscombe Place. The entertainment lasted for four nights, in the course of which three new and original pieces were acted. An ordinary play-going spectator might have been well surprised at the artistic finish and thorough ease of the whole performance; but his astonishment would have ceased at once when he learned, as I did, that the amateur actors had conscientiously gone through many severe rehearsals day after day, and had patiently submitted to the experience and discipline of the well-known actor, Mr. Horace Wigan. Hence their undoubted success in the pieces given—‘Astrid,’ a Norwegian legend, dramatically rendered by Sir Percy Shelley; ‘Our Bitterest Foe,’ a charming one-act drama by Herbert Gardner; ‘Jack Robinson,’ an extravaganza, by Sir Percy Shelley; the comedietta entitled ‘Dearest Mamma,’ by Walter Gordon; and the favourite old farce ‘A Thumping Legacy,’ by J. Maddison Morton. Let me recommend amateurs to attend to their rehearsals as strictly and untiringly as I have reason to believe the gentlemen and ladies at Boscombe Place did, and they will have no fear of hearing critics talk about their performances as being not ‘amenable to criticism’—the most doubtful compliment it is possible to pay.

As the season goes on the complaint waxes louder and louder

that the young men won’t dance. This want of terpsichorean energy on the part of the *jeunesse dorée* of London Society was lamentably apparent last year, but it has now really become a very serious matter. Midnight comes, and the young ladies are still unpartnered; the gentlemen at last stroll in from theatre, opera, or club, but they don’t look at all like quadrilles or waltzing. A conventional turn or two round the room, and then a prolonged lounge against the wall, appears to be what is called dancing nowadays. This is all very sad and disappointing for the young ladies who are ‘just out,’ and fondly anticipate that their first London balls will be thoroughly lively and amusing. And their chagrin must become almost intolerable when they further remark, that the elegant creatures who ought to be busily employed in soliciting the favour of a dance and taking strong physical exercise in careering round the ball-room, seem to find ample amusement in gossiping with the chaperones or paying undue attentions to the handsome married ladies. It seems as if the men will do anything rather than dance—they even prefer supper. What kind of a sign of the times are we to consider this expanding portent? Shall we think that in London Society dancing is doomed, and that the light fantastic toe will soon cease altogether to tread the light measure to Messrs. Coote and Tinney’s fascinating music? Shall we deem that we are on the verge of a social revolution, when galop melodies shall be hushed for ever and balls shall be no more? We may rely upon it that the catastrophe will not be brought about without a strong remonstrance on the part of the interested individuals for whom balls have a deep significance. It is

whispered that in certain female coteries schemes of vengeance are being planned. Many of the ladies, it is hinted, are meditating some kind of strike. They say that the young men are becoming too eminently selfish; that Adonis prefers his club, and, possibly, has found unedifying charms in a sphere of society where conventionalities are not so strict, where dancing is really dancing, where light jests and unrestrained laughter reign supreme, where formal introductions are not *de rigueur*, and where the smiles and sighs of well-dressed syrens allure with more resistless coquetry than is to be found in the more demure salons of the West End squares. 'These things ought not so to be,' the stately matrons mutter, as they gather in solemn conclave at five o'clock tea, or in the drawing-room after the banquet. 'Matters are going on from bad to worse. Marriageable daughters remain on hand season after season, and marriageable men appear to feel no remorse from the fact, but rather to rejoice in their shameless freedom. What is the reason of this state of things?' Ah! what, indeed! My dear madam, if you could gain admittance to the club smoking-room — which, for the sake of the peace of that hallowed spot, it is, perhaps, as well that you cannot—you would probably hear reflections upon the state of society, which, if they did not altogether startle you, might at least guide your reflections towards paths into which they have hitherto declined to stray. But, failing such assistance from unpleasant insight, what is to be done? It is said that certain leading ladies—leading, that is, in the social, not in the dramatic sense—are seriously contemplating a *clôture* of their salons, and are threatening to make a solitude in the rose-

gardens of the season. Since the gilded youth of society expresses such a sense of boredom with the tame delights of the usual routine, a decided check shall be put upon the large expenditure involved in unnecessary ball-giving; and then, perhaps, the erring sheep will learn to miss the folds from which they have too often strayed. But before a hasty decision is arrived at it might be worth while considering that the sheep might grow 'to rejoice in fresh fields and pastures new, and declare, with the lotos-eaters, that they will return no more. May not a better remedy be suggested? Without saying that the sensational effects of the Lord Mayor's Fancy Ball should be closely imitated in future, the remark might be hazarded that some fresh elements of interest might be added to the dull rounds of conventional balls. Two suggestions may be offered, to begin with. In the first place, it should be laid down as an inexorable rule that no attempt should be made to get more than a given number of persons of both sexes into a given area, so that locomotion may not be impeded, and that the heat, worry, and disappointment invariably engendered by a jostling crowd may be carefully avoided; and, in the next place, some new dances really must be invented. Everybody is utterly sick of the perpetual quadrille, lancers, and waltz. Surely, in this ingenuous age, some creative mind will rise equal to the occasion, if encouraged to make the experiment, and dancers will be relieved of a monotonous performance, which is only paralleled by the exercise of the treadmill!

All persons who have read 'Kenelm Chillingly,' Lord Lytton's latest and, perhaps, best novel, will remember the instruc-

tions given by Chillingly Mivers, the editor of 'The Londoner,' to his art-critic. He said: 'By-the-way, when we come to review the Exhibition at Burlington House, there is one painter whom we must try our best to crush. I have not seen his pictures myself, but he is a new man, and our friend, who has seen him, is terribly jealous of him, and says that if the good judges do not put him down at once, the villainous taste of the public will set him up as a prodigy. A low-lived fellow, too, I hear. There is the name of the man and the subjects of the pictures. See to it when the time comes. Meanwhile, prepare the way for onslaught on the pictures by occasional sneers at the painter.' Let us hope that no such instructions are nowadays given out by able editors; or, at all events, are confined to such trifles as the drama. Certainly we are not disposed to think that any painter has suffered from such false criticism at this, the one hundred and fifth Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts. *FREE LANCE* does not pretend to be like Iago—nothing, if he is not critical; experience has taught him that professionals are not unfrequently like those people who 'rush in where angels fear to tread'; he is content merely to state his impressions, without recording them as deep experiments in the 'Gay Science.' Chief impressions, then, *FREE LANCE* is content to record. Mr. Le Clear's portrait of Edwin Booth, the American tragedian, presents to our gaze a highly intellectual and expressive face, and I should be extremely glad if this actor would favour us with a visit. He may depend upon it we should give him a hearty welcome. Mr. V. Prinsep's picture of Lady Teazle concealed by the screen suggests the inquiry whether Miss Fawsitt

was right in wearing powder at the Vaudeville Theatre in this character; otherwise we should say that the modern actress comes up to Mr. Prinsep's idea, which seems a very good one. Mr. Leslie's 'The Fountain' is classical and poetic, but the background is somewhat wearisome, and the figures look a little too much as if they were conscious of a photographer standing ready with his machine. 'Foundered,' by Mr. W. L. Wyllie, is rather a ghostly production, and, while we admit the remarkably fine effect of water, gives us the notion that the ill-fated vessel is foundering, or has foundered, in about four fathoms, a depth scarcely sufficient for practical purposes. Very much do I like Mr. A. J. Stark's notion of 'The Angler's Nook'; the colouring is excellent; the pike, perch, and spinning-rod, are very real; the angler, we presume, is at lunch, resting from his labours. 'The Strayed Maskers,' by Mr. E. Benson, is a highly dramatic and tolerably successful effort, but it hardly tells its own story with sufficient plainness. Next to this hangs Mr. J. G. Cooper's representation of a churchyard, which, while certainly pleasant to look upon, hardly comes up to the idea embodied in the verses chosen as the text. There is a fluffiness about the foliage which is not pleasant, and I own to an objection to seeing sheep feeding upon verdant graves. Mr. B. W. Leader's 'English Cottage-houses' is very pretty, but suggests the want of an improving landlord; thus the picturesque wars with utilitarianism. 'Hay Time,' by Mr. V. Cole, is a rich bit of English scenery. Mr. B. G. Head's picture, 'Little Poachers,' may be condemned as too glaring in colouring; but quite as strong natural effects may be often seen in the beech-woods of

Bucks. Mr. H. Hardy contributes a forcible picture of a fight between two lions, a lioness crouching in the foreground—a notion taken, alas! only too probably, from the natural history of man; and, to complete the fable, vultures are hovering in the distance. In Mr. A. F. Payne's '*Alice in Wonderland*' we are introduced to a child who has been reading that interesting work, and is evidently thinking whether or not the adventures of Alice were enviable or the reverse. The painter seems to have been concerned mostly with the carpet, the curtains, and a scattered pack of cards; but he may certainly be congratulated on the success of his endeavours. '*Early Efforts*', by Mr. J. Clark, represents a little boy in humble life drawing the portrait of his dying grandpapa; not at all a bad little picture, this. Mr. Redgrave's '*Fading Year*' is hardly sufficiently autumnal, but it is very striking. Mr. G. A. Storey's '*Scandal*' is one of his happiest efforts. Several excellent persons have called, apparently, upon an invalid lady, but, instead of troubling themselves much about her ladyship's state of health, they are all intent upon mutual gossip, and forget the object of their sympathy in their eager desire to hear 'something new.' The grouping in this picture would do credit to the ablest stage manager; the whole scene is conceived in the true spirit of comedy, and is carried out with remarkable dramatic effect. Each face tells a story of its own. Mr. Redgrave's '*Lonely Well-head*' is refreshing to gaze on in this hot weather. '*Christ's Reproof to the Pharisees*', by E. Armitage, R.A., has doubtless been the subject of much discussion. The faces and figures of the Pharisees are undeniably excellent, but the Christ is a failure.

Somehow or other modern artists seem wholly incapable of that deep suggestion of divinity which is the wonder of the old masters. Mr. Archer's portrait of Mr. Henry Irving, in his character of Charles I., is not very satisfactory; it may be Charles I., but it is not Mr. Irving; and the probabilities are that, at some distant period, it will be sold by an auctioneer as a true portrait of the ill-fated monarch. '*Tintoretto painting his dead Daughter*', by H. O'Neil, is a painful subject, but it is sympathetically treated; the pale corpse is lying on the bed; the painter sunk in sad reverie, and on the canvas before him lies the representation of the child, with all the roses of health restored to her cheek, not dead, but sleeping. '*La Levée de Monseigneur*' is a charming picture, and we heartily congratulate Mr. C. Calthrop upon his success. The little prince is lounging in an arm-chair, while a magnificent personage puts on his little shoes; a cross-faced cardinal, to whom Monseigneur's education has evidently been entrusted, has just made his entrance through the half-drawn tapestry; toy soldiers and cannon are on the floor, emblems of the political difficulties which Monseigneur will have to contend with when he has grown a little older; the valet is heating the curling-tongs—ah! for which will Monsieur care most in years to come—cannons or curls? The arrangement of the apartment is well conceived and admirably executed. '*St. Paul at Philippi*', is the diploma picture of Mr. W. C. T. Dobson, R.A. The figure of the saint is very fine. The '*Subsiding of the Nile*', by Mr. F. Goodall, R.A., is a grand picture, fully sustaining the reputation of the artist. The light upon the distant pyramids is truly wonderful.

FREE LANCE.

NEW BOOKS RECEIVED.

' "He Cometh Not," She Said.' By Annie Thomas. *Chapman & Hall.*

'A Vagabond Heroine.' By Mrs. Edwardes. *R. Bentley & Son.*

'By and By.' By Edward Maitland. *R. Bentley & Son.*

'Which Sister?' By Sydney Mostyn. *R. Bentley & Son.*

'Over Turf and Stubble.' By Old Calabar. *R. Bentley & Son.*

'The Songs of Wales.' Edited by Brinley Richards. *Boosey & Co.*

WHEN a novel has been pronounced by one of the first critical authorities of the day to be consistently 'vulgar' and 'commonplace,' one naturally approaches its perusal with a degree of trepidation. It was in this spirit we took up 'He Cometh Not,' but we are pleased to be able to record that we were agreeably disappointed. 'Commonplace' the story may be, for it is simply a narrative of the repeated heart-aches experienced by a woman who has pinned her faith on the love of an unprincipled and irresolute man; and nothing can be more common in this world than disappointment; but 'vulgar' (in the ordinary acceptance) it certainly is not. There are a few expressions we should like to see expunged, for though they are used naturally, and much as we are doomed occasionally to hear them, the style of conversation patronised by the young women of the present day is not sufficiently interesting to deserve reproduction. With this exception, however, 'He Cometh Not' is a thoroughly bright and readable book, and to our mind the best Annie Thomas has given us for a long time. The various characters, whether lovable or

otherwise, are all graphic, and the bits of scene-painting are not less real. The story, also, although slight, possesses the charm of carrying the reader's interest with it to the end.

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It is a real pleasure to take up a book like Mrs. Edwardes'. From Belinda O'Shea, the vagabond heroine, to Rosie, her foolish, affected stepmother, and her self-deceiving lover, Roger Temple, each character is individual and strong, and Belinda herself, with her 'espargottes,' her 'paume' playing, and her 'bolero' dancing, thoroughly original. The worst fault we can find with the story is, that it is too short. We should have liked to have had pages more of Belinda's wild doings, and Rosie's absurd conversation, and Roger Temple's perplexities. It all ends too soon, but while it lasts, it is delightful. Mrs. Edwardes has made long strides forward since she wrote 'Archie Lovell,' and takes her place now in the first rank of our female novelists.

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'By and By, an Historical Romance of the Future,' by the clever author of the 'Pilgrim and the Shrine,' is composed somewhat after the style of the 'Coming Race,' although it differs largely, both in treatment and design, from that much read work. It is supposed to be written some centuries hence, when the Victorian era shall have become a mere matter of bygone history, and every scientific invention now in its infancy have advanced to a state of perfection. Aerial travelling is to be, by that time, the commonest mode of locomotion,

and the electric wires, intersecting the earth, air, and sea, to afford means of instantaneous communication with each other, for all mankind. Laws are to be amended (not before required), the rights of women established, and royalty done away with. The sacrament of marriage is to be divided into three classes. The first, to be disannulled only by the law; the second, by mutual consent; the third, at the option of one of the contracting parties alone. Men and women, too, are to have grown so sensible as not to consider it actually incumbent on married people to live in the same house, and worry each other's lives out. What a number of domestic quarrels might be avoided in this day, if Mr. and Mrs. Jones only met once a week, and then when they were on their best behaviour. 'By and By' makes one feel horribly discontented to think one cannot possibly live long enough to come in for a share of all these good things. But let us take comfort. Mr. Maitland assures us that spirits also love, marry, and bring up small families, so there is a chance for all; and perhaps when we have contracted spiritual unions, we shall not be envious of the free and easy way they will have settled things down here below. Let us, at all events, live in hope that it may be so.

We find it difficult to say anything favourable of 'Which Sister?' which, though an improvement on the author's former work, is very feeble, both in plot and character. The accident of one sister supplanting the other in the affections of a young man, who does not appear to have been particularly worth the consideration of either, is the sole basis on which the story rests; and the only

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sketch that retains any idiosyncrasy is that of Aunt Ann. Whilst the author, however, in the person of her heroine, apologises for the lapses of grammar of which this worthy is occasionally guilty, she should not forget her own. 'My lady love is you,' is rather an awkward sentence, while 'more easier,' and the use of the past 'was' for the subjunctive 'were,' are worse than awkward. On the whole, though, 'Which Sister?' is superior as a work of fiction to the 'Deceased Wife's Sister,' which is not, however, saying much.

'Over Turf and Stubble' is, as its title indicates, a record of sporting experiences, which are told in a thoroughly easy and conversational manner, and comprise several curious anecdotes connected with the pursuit of game. It is a volume to take up after dinner, or on a journey, or over a cigar. There is nothing to fatigue in it, and much to interest; and every narrative bears the stamp of authority upon its pages.

'The Songs of Wales: a collection of National Melodies,' has reached us. To say that they are edited by Brinley Richards, and published by Messrs. Boosey, is to say that the compilation is as complete as it can be. Miss Edith Wynne has made many of the airs we find in this volume familiar to the English public, but there is scarcely one that will not become popular, on acquaintance, for its own sake. Amongst so many it is difficult to select favourites, but we must give prominent notice, amongst the sentimental ones, to 'All through the Night,' 'A Gentle Maid in Secret Sighed,' and 'The Bells of Abergovey,' whilst the 'Cambrian Plume' and 'Cambrian War Song,'

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with the famous 'March of the Men of Harlech,' are grand specimens of martial music. We recommend every one who has not yet seen it to procure this little

volume, which will introduce them to a selection of vocal gems that cannot fail to afford them as much profit as pleasure.



